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The Heroic Life and Exploits of SIEGFRIED the Dragon Slayer.

AN OLD GERMAN STORY.

With Eight Illuſtrations deſigned by

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FIRST ADVENTURE.

Of King Siegmund, and of Heroes, Dwarfs, Giants, and Dragons of ancient Times.

IN times of old there lived, in the Low Countries, a King named Siegmund, who was mighty in power and rich in honour. His caſtles were ſtrong, and his men-at-arms were brave; he had ſwords glancing as the ſun, and ſhields of ſilver white as the moon, feſtal robes embroidered with gold, precious jewels, noble ſteeds, and herds of fat cattle. But his greateſt and nobleſt treaſure was a lofty and truly royal mind, for King Siegmund was wiſe in counſel, brave in battle, and upright in judgement. He liſtened willingly to the advice of the wiſe and aged among his people, and was never diſpleaſed even if they ſpoke with rudeneſs and reproach. His heart was not ſet upon wealth or treaſures: as the majeſtic ſun fills hill

and vale with warmth and light, as the cheerful May decks the fields and woods with flowers, ſo from his gentle hand flowed gifts and favours in rich abundance to reward true merit, to honour the deeds of fathers or kindle the heroiſm of their ſons. To every wanderer his kingly hall ſtood open, to every one he proffered the hand of welcome; he entertained all as became his royal dignity, and at parting he offered to every one a gift in token of remembrance.

Thus King Siegmund was famed throughout all Germany, and along the Rhine, from north to ſouth, the keen edge of his ſword and the glitter of his gold-wrought ſhield were the theme of heroic ſong. Far and wide, too, whoever had complaint to make againſt injuſtice or oppreſſion, whoever deſired to acquire honour and renown, repaired to Xanthe at Königſburg on the Rhine, where Siegmund ſat amid his heroes at an iron table. On his right hand was Siegelinde, his beauteous queen and his companion, who ſhared his happineſs, conſoled him in adverſity, and tended his wounds with her gentle hand. All the people honoured and loved the wife and brave King Siegmund and the gentle and fair Siegelinde.

But ſince the day when they both ſat upon the royal throne in honour and ſplendour on the banks of the Rhine, many generations have deſcended to that ſilent and narrow houſe whence none return. Nor in any of the lands where German ſongs are ſung, does there ſtand any oak ſo old that it might ſay, "When I was young and in my early vigour, many

hundred years ago, the noble King Siegmund and his faithful train of followers rode paſt me to the chaſe and the battle." For in the time of King Siegmund there ſtill ſtood in the old primeval foreſts, broad and high, the ancient "thunder-oaks" of heathen times, which at a much later period were cut down by Bonifacius, that highly favoured man of God, and his holy companions, when they brought to our forefathers in their dark foreſts the light of the Chriſtian faith, and ſuffered for this with joyful courage the death of martyrs.

Dark and fearful were thoſe ancient foreſts, as tradition tells, where ſtood the oaks and the blood-ſtained altars of the Pagan gods in the days of King Siegmund. None dared wander there without his ſword at his ſide and his ſpear in his hand. The hunter might purſue the beaſts of prey through the lonely woods and vales for many a day and neither meet a human being nor find a path. The ſtars of heaven and the courſe of the waters were his only guides in the vaſt wilderneſs. Ravenous wild beaſts of enormous ſtrength and fearful nature, ſuch as are now no longer ſeen, the urochs and the bear, the lion and the wolf, prowled through the woods, and filled the air with their fierce and hungry cries, making the foreſts re-echo with their ſounds. And when the lofty oaks ruſtled, and the branches cracked and ſnapped aſunder, and the winds moaned and whiſtled in angry ſounds from the rocks and caves, it ſeemed as if the ſpirit of the ſtorm had come with horſe and hound, to chaſe the wild inhabitants of the foreſts.

In the air there dwelt a yet more ſavage race of birds, who built their neſts high upon the rocks, and thence deſcending upon the woods conteſted with the wolves their prey, and carried off men and beaſts in their talons as food for their young. Poiſonous vapours brooded over the vaſt and bottomleſs moraſſes, in which baſked ſerpents and adders, as long as trees, of every kind and form. In the hollow rocks and caves lurked ſnakes and dragons, their bodies clad in ſcales black as night, whoſe peſtilential breath ſinged and burned like fire. But worſt of all, fierce and evil Giants were in alliance with this helliſh dragon brood. They were a dark and wicked race, who, created before heaven or earth, refuſed to bow the knee, and ſet their foot on the necks of weaker mortals, compelling them to do what their impious arrogance required. For their hearts were dark as the woods of old, and wild as the ſavage animals that dwelt therein; and, like the ſnakes and dragons in the poiſonous ſwamps, they had grown amid all horrible vices to a fearful ſize, and mocked at heaven, and thought only of evil.

In thoſe ſad times the poor Dwarfs were compelled to ſuffer moſt from the wicked Giants. Theſe were a people weak and ſmall of ſtature, but who from time immemorial had handed down among themſelves many a tradition of old; and poſſeſſed much ſecret knowledge of the powers of plants and ſtones. Thus they had become experienced in many myſterious arts, and were rendered cunning, ſhy, and reſerved by the

ſevere oppreſſion they endured. They dwelt chiefly in the deep ſhafts of mines, and there wrought truſty weapons and rich ornaments from the precious metals and brilliant jewels. The Giants, however, kept watch over their abodes, and forced them to work night and day. If the poor little Dwarfs wiſhed to repoſe, they angrily thruſt down their large ſtakes of iron, or trod them to death like rats. Then the affrighted Dwarfs dared no longer venture into the light of day, but hid themſelves in the deepeſt receſſes.

The cunning Dwarfs were therefore bitter foes of the arrogant Giants and warm friends to the Heroes. Theſe were men of the ſword, and endowed by heaven with courage and ſtrength to fight againſt the Giants and poiſonous ſerpents, to clear the foreſts and ſwamps, ſo that the ſeed of a milder and more holy doctrine might be ſown there. The Dwarfs often furniſhed the Heroes with ſharp ſwords and ſtout ſhields, and taught them many of their arts, that they might gain the victory over their oppreſſors.

This was therefore a time of wild ſtrife and combat, and the beſt treaſure which a man could have was an active courage, a ſtout heart, and a truſty ſword. All theſe the Heroes poſſeſſed, and to them belonged the noble race of Siegmund, the King of the Low Countries, famed in ancient ſong and ſtory.

SECOND ADVENTURE.

Of Siegfried the Swift, how he grew up to be a Hero, and of his throwing the Spear.

NOW King Siegmund with his conſort, the beauteous Siegelinde, had a youthful ſon, who was fair and ſtrong and of a lofty ſpirit. While an infant on his mother's lap, his clear blue eyes glanced brightly as thoſe of an eagle, and whoever beheld him could at once perceive that in him the heroic ſpirit of his race exiſted, and that his name would one day be mentioned with honour. He was quick as lightning in all his actions, whence they named him Siegfried the Swift.

From his childhood he was carefully inſtructed by the Heroes at the round iron table of his ſire in all the duties of a Hero; yet he ſcarcely required this care, for his own courage impelled him from the earlieſt dawn of day to practiſe every kind of weapon, and endure the hardeſt toils. In the evening he liſtened with eager curioſity while the old Heroes, grown gray in fights, recounted the adventures that had befallen them in their wanderings in foreign lands, or while they extolled the great names and deeds of ancient times, and taught him maxims

befitting a noble and high-minded Hero. From his earlieſt childhood his daring courage ſpoke forth in all his language and diſcourſe.

Siegfried had once gone into the foreſt, accompanied by one of his venerable tutors in ſong and war, and two young companions, to hew ſome trees for the handles of their ſpears. As evening drew on, the aged man ſeated himſelf on a high rock, whence he could ſurvey the country round, with its dark foreſts, its green meadows and golden fields of corn. He took one boy after another in turn upon his knee, held him firmly before him and looked at him ſternly, as if about to throw him over the precipice. The two other lads trembled at his angry look, as at a gleam of lightning; but Siegfried gazed on him with a fearleſs ſmile and open eye, like a young falcon when looking for the firſt time at the ſun. The old man ſet him down, and was pleaſed, for he felt that the blood of the ancient heroes flowed in the boy's veins, and that he would one day, in like manner, look with a ſteady eye upon the flaming ſwords when they ſhould gleam around him.

One of the boys looked at the goats that grazed near them; the other looked up at the wild fruits of the foreſt; but Siegfried remained ſeated on the old warrior's knee, playing with the handle of the hero's ſword, which his young hands could ſcarcely lift. Then ſaid one of the boys, as he looked at the wide landſcape before him, "Now if I had anything to wiſh for, it ſhould be that all the valley of the Rhine, from the lofty

mountains in the ſouth to the ſea in the north, were one large field of grain, and that I had in every part my farmyards and granaries and barns, ſo that no King might be richer than I." "And I," ſaid the other boy, "would wiſh that the whole vale beneath us were one vaſt meadow, and that my herds, horſes, oxen and cows were grazing on it in ſuch numbers that no one could count them from morning to night." Siegfried liſtened, but was ſilent, until the old man aſked him what his wiſh would be. "I ſhould wiſh for a good, ſharp ſword, like thine," exclaimed Siegfried boldly; "and I would brandiſh it like a King upon this high rock, and if foes and giants and dragons ſhould come, I would ſmite them with the ſword, that not one ſhould return home; and ſo many brave and noble heroes ſhould ſtand by me, that all your granaries and herds ſhould not ſuffice us when we partook our meal together. And I would go forth with them and free every country, from eaſt to weſt, of monſters and oppreſſors of every kind." Thus ſpoke Siegfried, and the old man ſmiled approvingly, for he bethought him that the boy had ſpoken well.

When he returned home, the young King's ſon could not ſleep for thinking how he ſhould one day be a renowned hero like his forefathers, who had worn the crown with honour, and had done mighty and valiant deeds; ſo that their fame was extolled throughout all lands, from the riſing to the ſetting of the ſun.

Siegfried's maſters in warlike exerciſes took increaſing plea-



ſure in the lad, whoſe eye was keen as his arm was ſtrong and his feelings noble. None could ſhoot the eagle as he ſoared high in the air like him, nor ſpear the mighty boar with ſo ſure a ſtroke: yet all were fond of him, for he excelled them all no leſs in magnanimity and gentleneſs than in ſtrength of arm. If in their exerciſes he overthrew one of his companions, he was himſelf the firſt to help him up again, and comfort him; ſo that no one envied him, for none was ſo generous and noble-hearted as he.

Thus the young Hero grew up and proſpered, and could ſoon wield his falchion better even than his inſtructors; no wild beaſt was there in the woods around that he would have ſhrunk from attacking, and no hero drank from the cup of King Siegmund to whom he would have yielded in fight, although he was as yet but a mere ſtripling. Now it happened that he was one evening amuſing himſelf in a meadow on the banks of the Rhine, in front of his father's caſtle, with ſome of his young companions—in wreſtling, racing, throwing the ſpear, and other martial games. There was not however one who could throw his ſpear ſo ſwiftly but that Siegfried could run after it, catch it in its flight, and bring it back to its owner. There was one alone among them who at all approached him in ſpeed: to him he ſaid, "Hark ye, my friend, I will dart my ſpear into yonder oak, and before thy hand has touched the ſpear, either in the air or in the tree, I will have drained my drinking-horn to thy health. If I ſucceed, thy noble falcon

ſhall be mine; if thou winneſt, thy prize ſhall be my drinking-horn."

All who heard this deemed it a fooliſh offer, for the drinking-horn was of ivory, richly adorned with gold and ſilver, and with ancient ſtories ſkilfully depicted on it. Ten noble falcons would not have matched its worth. "Surely," thought they all, "he has quaffed his laſt draught out of that drinking-horn. The oaks in yon meadow are not far off, and the other lad will have brought the ſpear ere he ſhall have put the horn to his lips."

The other lad thought ſo likewiſe, and gladly prepared for the trial. Siegfried now filled his horn, while all around ſtood anxiouſly watching him. With one hand he ſwept the fair curls from his brow, with the other he poiſed his ſpear, as if aiming at the neareſt oak in the meadow. Near him ſtood the runner, while around him his companions watched his motions as he bent backwards and forwards to balance the ſpear, all full of curioſity to ſee how the affair would end. Siegfried now drew back, and with a mighty effort hurled the ſpear, ſmiling as he threw it; the ſpear flew whiſtling acroſs the broad Rhine, and pierced deep into a diſtant oak on the oppoſite ſide. His competitor had already ſet off running towards the oaks on the meadow; he thought he was in advance of the ſpear, but turning round, he ſaw all his companions laughing and pointing to the diſtant oak. Inſtantly he ſprang into the river, and ſwam ſtraight as an arrow to where the ſpear had flown. Siegfried,

ſmiling, emptied his richly ornamented horn to the ſucceſs of the ſwimmer, and bade his comrades do the like. They drank, and exclaimed, "Hail to young Siegfried! ſince the days of the heroes of old, no ſpear has been better thrown in the lands of Germany, and long will it be remembered from north to ſouth!"

Preſently the ſwimmer returned with the ſpear, took his falcon, and offered it to Siegfried as his prize. But Siegfried preſented to him the full drinking-horn, ſaying, "Scarcely along the whole courſe of the Rhine could a ſwimmer be found to excel thee; but thou haſt taſted water enough, ſo refreſh thee from the horn." After he had drank, Siegfried placed the falcon on his own arm, playfully put the gold band of his horn in his beak, took the hood from his eyes, and let him looſe. The falcon flew with the horn into the blue ſky: wheeling round and round, as if ſeeking his prey, he floated with outſtretched and almoſt motionleſs wings over the Königsburg. Then ſaid Siegfried ſmiling, "Call thy falcon off, or he will pounce upon my mother's white doves on the caſtle roof, and then he will never dare come into her ſight again." His companion did ſo, and at his whiſtle the falcon deſcended ſtraight down, and ſettled on the ſhoulder of his former maſter. But Siegfried ſaid, "See! the faithful creature will not acknowledge me as his rightful maſter; he thinks I have won the wager wrongfully, and he has therefore brought the drinking-horn as the prize which of right belongs to thee. His deciſion

ſhall prevail; keep the horn, and when in the ſocial banquet thou drinkeſt from it, thou and thy race to all futurity ſhall think of me and of my caſting the ſpear!"

So ſpake Siegfried, and all who heard him were well pleaſed with his ſpeech, and ſaid one to another, "He has thrown the ſpear like a hero, and ſpoken as became a King's ſon."

THIRD ADVENTURE.

Of the Emperor Otnit and Wolfdietrich, and how Siegfried aſked permiſſion to go out into the World.



N the evening they all returned ſinging to the Königſburg, where they ſat down to table in the large hall. They ranged themſelves around the fire; one cut himſelf arrows, another ſharpened his ſword, or poliſhed his ſhield, or ſet his hunting-gear in order. Meantime much was ſaid, both mirthful and grave, of battles and hunting, of feaſts and feſtivals. Siegfried alone ſat ſilent by the fire, played with the burning brands, and looked thoughtfully on the flames as if dreaming.

The evening was far advanced, when one of the party took down a horn from the wall, and began to blow on it, whilſt an aged minſtrel ſang a ſong of the Emperor Otnit, which began thus:—

" No longer may I tarry,"
The Emperor Otnit ſaid,
" For I muſt fight the Dragon
In yonder foreſt ſhade."

In vain around him clinging
Faſt hung his anxious wife,
He leaves her in her ſorrow,
And haſtens to the ſtrife.

He rode about the foreſt,
He rode the vale along,
The weary way beguiling
With many an ancient ſong.

In hollows and in caverns
He ſtrove the foe to find;
His ſhouts of bold defiance
Were loſt upon the wind.

At length he ſees a meadow,
Through which a ſtreamlet flows,
A bird ſang there ſo ſweetly,
Inviting to repoſe.

The air was all enchanted,
The earth was fairy ground;
The very winds breathed muſic,
And magic dwelt around.

Upon a bed of roſes
The Hero lays him low,
Nor thinks that near him lieth
His fierce and deadly foe.

In vain his hound is barking,
His ſteed neighs loud and deep;
Alas! their faithful warning
But ſoothes him in his ſleep.

He dreams that he has conquer'd,
That the mighty Dragon's dead:—
The Monſter howls beſide him,
And wakes him from his bed.

In vain he graſped his weapon,
The Dragon o'er him ſtood:
Alas! that pleaſant meadow
Is dyed with Otnit's blood.

When the minſtrel had finiſhed, Siegfried ſaid, "In truth, 'tis a mournful lay, and it makes me ſad to think that ſo bold a hero ſhould periſh ſo miſerably in his ſleep. Sing us a more cheerful ſong, and tell us if no one came who avenged the noble Emperor on the poiſonous ſerpent."

"The ſong, it is true, is melancholy; but you youths and ſons of heroes may learn from it a uſeful leſſon, not to allow yourſelves to be allured by ſoft voices, or lie careleſſly down to

ſlumber on roſes when you are going to meet the foe. Yes indeed the Emperor Otnit was avenged, and that is the ſubject of a more cheerful ſong, which I will ſing you as my parting ſong to-night." Accordingly he began again :—

SAY, who was beſt and braveſt
Amid the battle's rage?
And who was held moſt famous
In the old heroic age?

The Knight moſt bold and famous,
Wolfdietrich he is named,
He ſlew full many a Dragon,
Full many a Lion tamed.

'Twas early in the morning,
The Hero, waking, cried,
" Awake! away! to battle
This moment I muſt ride."

'Twas thus he cried at waking,
And ſprang at once to horſe,
Fierce Giants and fell Dragons
Deſtroying in his courſe.

He rode a long day's journey
The woods and meadows through,
And came to Berne's fair city,
Beſide the lake ſo blue.

He gazed upon the caſtle,
Where once in joyous mood
The Emperor's gueſts were feaſted,
And drank the red grape's blood.

And haſting to the portal,
The brave Knight blew his horn,
And aſked the ſilent watchman,
In anger and in ſcorn:

" Now ſpeak, and ſay this moment,
Thou watchman on the wall,
Why Otnit's dogs are howling,
Why keeps his ſteed the ſtall?

" Why are your halls ſo ſilent,
Your banner darkly furled?
Has then brave Otnit periſhed,
The wonder of the world?"

Reſponding from the turret,
The ſorrowing watchman ſaid,
" Reſpect our grief, and leave us,
We mourn, alas, the dead!

" 'Twas on a fatal morning
Lord Otnit left theſe walls;
For this his hounds are howling,
And ſilent are his halls."

" And tell me, old man, truly,
Before I may depart,
Where dwells his lovely widow,
And weeps her bitter ſmart?

" Erewhile a hundred maidens
Her truth and beauty ſang;
A hundred heroes' ſabres
Their glad accordance rang."

A voice came from thoſe turrets,
So ſoft, ſo ſad, ſo deep,
" Sir Knight, depart in pity,
And leave me here to weep.

" My grief is paſt my telling,
I weep both night and day,
For this is ſorrow's dwelling,
And now, Sir Knight, away!

" He only will I welcome,
I ever, ever ſaid,
Who on the poiſonous Serpent
Revenges Oſnit dead!

" And ſince none dared avenge him,
I ſtill withheld my hand;
For this the baſe oppreſſor
Hath taken my gold and land.

" So ride away, Sir Stranger,
For all my joys have flown ;
From early morn till even
I ſit and weep alone."

" I ride not home, ſweet Lady,
'Tis not for gold or land
I come to ſeek your caſtle,
With my truſty ſword in hand ;

" But Giants fierce and Dragons
I dare to mortal ſtrife ;
The ſufferer and the mourner
I guard with limb and life :

" Where pain and ſorrow languiſh
Beneath oppreſſion's might,
Where death appears in anguiſh
Upon the field of fight,

" There is my ſcene of labour,
'Tis there I haſte with ſpeed,
'Tis there I wield my ſabre,
'Tis there I urge my ſteed."

" O ride along, Sir Stranger,
Your hand is all too weak,
Nor on the field of danger
Preſume your fate to ſeek."

Thus ſpoke the weeping Lady,
A veil conceal'd her face,
While down her cheeks of beauty
Her tears each other chaſe.

That moment came a falcon,
And ſeized upon her dove,
And bore his prey ſo gentle
To the blue ſky far above.

His ſpear the Hero graſping,
He hurled it ſwift on high;
It reached the falcon flying,
And pierced him in the ſky.

The dove return'd uninjured,
And ſought his miſtreſs fair;
The hawk fell in the waters,
And ſank and periſhed there.

She gave him from her finger
A ring, a ring of gold;
He ſaid, " O gentle Lady,
Be kind, as I am bold."

He ſpoke,—ſhe cloſed the caſement,
He ſaw her parting form,
Then ſwiftly turned his courſer
And hurried like the ſtorm.

On either hand beſide him
A dog now ſwiftly bounds;
They follow him, and gladly,
For they are Oſnit's hounds.

And haſting on his ſally,
He rides in joyous mood,
And finds at length the valley
Where dwells the Dragon brood.

And hark, o'er all the valley,
What ſights and ſounds of ire!
What mean thoſe fearful roarings,
Thoſe flames of deadly fire?

A Lion fights the Dragon,
And hence thoſe horrors came;
The Lion breathes the roaring,
The Dragon breathes the flame.

The Lion bounds to greet him,
With teeth ſo ſharp, ſo white;
The Dragon crawls to meet him,
With fangs of deadlier might.

"'Tis well, my truſty Lion,"
The hero Dietrich cried,
"I'll help thee in the conflict,
And battle by thy ſide."

The Hero braves the monſter,
And hurls his ſpear with ſpeed,
But 'gainſt that ſcaly armour
'Tis broken like a reed.

Again he braves the monſter,
And wields his ſword in ire,
But it melts before his breathing,
Like lead before the fire.

Again the Lion ſallies
In fury to the ſtrife;
Again Wolfdietrich rallies,
And ſeeks the Dragon's life.

They wreſtle and they ſtruggle,
Yet ſeem to ſtrive in vain,
For neither yields the conteſt,
Though their blood has dyed the plain.

The Dragon with his talons
Has ſeized the Hero's ſhield;
The Lion ſprings upon him,
The Dragon ſeems to yield.

And now the Dragon ſeizes
The Lion in his tail,
Againſt its deadly preſſure
Nor ſtrength nor ſkill prevail.

And weaker yet, and weaker,
The brave Wolfdietrich grows,
Till the Dragon breath'd but o'er him,
And no more the Hero roſe.

The monſter bore the Lion
Wrapt in his ſcaly fold,
And in his jaws of fury
He bore the Knight ſo bold.

But ah! his limbs were weary,
And as he reach'd his neſt
He fell for very weakneſs,
And ſank at once to reſt.

Then creeping to the Lion
Came firſt the Dragon's brood,
They broke his bones aſunder,
And then they ſuck'd his blood.

They ſwallow firſt the Lion,
And, finiſhing their meal,
They next attack the Hero,
And lick his coat of mail;

But though they lick him over,
And moiſten leg and arm,
They cannot pierce his armour,—
The Knight lies free from harm.

And wearied thus and anger'd,
They ſeize him in their ſport,
And throw him to each other,
With many a wound and hurt.

They throw him each to other,
Amid their cruel play,
Till ſleep hath ſeized each brother,
And all in ſlumber lay.

So long the ſtars above him
Their nightly watching kept;
So long 'mid his tormentors
The patient Hero ſlept.

But when the ſun, ariſing,
Shot forth his earlieſt beam,
The Hero then awoke him,
As from ſome fearful dream.

He roſe at once on waking,
And ſought his ſword and ſpear,
But Dragons dire and corſes
Alone were lying near.

But ſearching all around him,
What charm might aid afford,
He ſaw not far before him
A light and gleaming ſword.

The ſword was once Lord Oſnit's,
He had borne it to the ſtrife;
That ſword alone is fated
To take the Dragon's life.

He waved it high, and ſwung it
So bravely and ſo true,
That ere the monſter waken'd
His head from ſhoulders flew.

He then aſſail'd the young ones,
He firſt cut off their head,
And next their tongue of venom,
And then exulting ſaid:

" Now I return in triumph,
And aſk the Lady's hand,
For Oſnit ſleeps with honour—
And free is all the land."

When the ſong was ended it was near midnight; the aged man laid himſelf down to reſt, and the others followed his example. Siegfried alone remained beſide the fire; he ſat ſilent and motionleſs, watching fixedly, like a man lurking in ambuſh for his foe; on a ſudden he ſnatched up a firebrand, waved it on high, and ſtruck at the flames violently, as if he would ſlay a Dragon, whilſt the ſparks flew about far and wide in the ancient hall.

The youth ſat thus awhile, in deep thought, when his eye fell on the wall where the deeds of his anceſtors, the Kings and Heroes of old, were to be ſeen ſkilfully worked in tapeſtry by noble dames, how they fought with Giants and Dragons. Above the pictures hung their victorious ſwords, and the weapons with which they had conquered, and the tongues and teeth of the monſters they had ſlain.

Siegfried, however, felt as if he dared not venture to look up at the ancient and venerable Heroes, as he ſat ſo idly there at home, and performed no deed worthy of remembrance. And as he raiſed his eyes, it appeared as if the faded pictures became reanimated, and were looking down upon him with reproach and ſcorn, and he ſeemed to hear a voice ſaying, "Ay, ſit there like a girl by the fire, Siegfried, and warm thee, all the days of thy life! that is thy place, but not abroad in the field, where brave men wield the ſword."

Then the youth grew angry; his eye ſhone bright and clear, he ſtarted up, ſeized the firebrand, and was about to hurl it againſt the figures that ſeemed to mock at him. But letting fall his arm, he exclaimed, "Had ye been living men and ſpoken to me thus ſcornfully, it would have availed you little, old graybeards, that ye were my anceſtors; I would have ſhown you that I can fight like a man. But what a fool am I to be quarrelling with old pictures on a wall! I will go forth into the world this very hour, and try the fate of battle, and win glory like my fathers, thoſe Kings and Heroes."

He went and took his beſt ſword, and girded it on his ſide. A large ancient ſhield which hung over the pictures he faſtened about his neck, ſlung over his ſhoulders a rich croſs-bow and a horn—the one that Wolfdietrich had borne of old,—and then threw over him the ſkin of a bear which he had himſelf overcome with his ſingle arm, without ſword or weapon. Thus armed, he entered the apartment where his father and mother ſlept, and ſtood before their couch. They aſked him what he was doing ſo early, and if he wiſhed to go forth to the chaſe. "Ay, truly, I do wiſh to go to the chaſe; but the game I ſeek is the fame of a Hero and the glory of the fight, and therefore am I come to aſk your leave and bleſſing. For I can bear no longer to ſit here idle, day after day, like a ſick falcon, that with broken wing dares not venture from its neſt; and I long to go forth into the world, to add to the glory of my race, as thou, father, and our forefathers, the Heroes and Kings from time immemorial have done in the days of your youth."

His father liſtened with joy to the words of the brave youth, yet not all unmixed with a ſaddened feeling; but the mother fell to weeping bitterly for her loved ſon, at the thought of the perils that his courage urged him to ſeek. "Nay, thou art yet too young," ſaid his father; "ſtay here awhile with us, until thou art ſtronger; then I will find companions to go with thee on thy heroic courſe."

"No, that may not be," anſwered Siegfried; "it would be death to me to tarry longer here. Wherever I look all



ſeem to mock my idle repoſe—night and day I have no reſt, and a ſecret impulſe drives me from my home. The thought is for ever preſent to my mind, that when the minſtrels of future times ſhall ſing of my anceſtors and of thee, and extol your deeds, they will think of me too, and ſcornfully exclaim, 'King Siegmund had indeed a ſon, ſtrong and tall as his father, but his name is loſt in the darkneſs of night, for he accompliſhed no deeds that might have adorned it. He thought only of chaſing the ſtags and timid deer in the foreſt, but he never ventured into the field of manly fight.' This is my conſtant thought, and it cuts me to the ſoul more than could the keeneſt edge of an enemy's ſword. Rather than waſte my life thus inglorioufly, and die like a young oak which cannot ſtretch itſelf out in the open air, let me go forth! perchance I may return a joyous victor, or find at leaſt a glorious death."

When Siegfried's ſire perceived his firm reſolution, he no longer withheld his conſent, but gave him his hand in teſtimony of his approbation, ſaying, "Go then, my ſon, and ſhow thyſelf worthy of thy fathers, the hero kings; be prudent in counſel and quick in action; ſtrong be thy arm and gentle thy mind, like the good ſword, which is ſharp and bending. Guard thyſelf againſt arrogance in proſperity, for that is the father of ruin; and be aſhamed of cowardice in ill-fortune, for ſuch is the mother of diſhonour and deſtruction. Avoid the diſcourſe and friendſhip of the artful and unworthy, for even the ſmell of poiſonous flowers is deadly. Truſt not, my ſon, the falſe ſmile of

the wicked, for it is like the green bog in the ſunſhine. Maintain thyſelf honourably in combat, be true to thy word, firm in friendſhip, and ſpotleſs in life; for life ſoon paſſes away, and when death meets thee, and robs thee of ſword and ſhield, helmet and ſpear, thy deeds will follow after thee, and for them thou wilt receive honour or ſhame, reward or puniſhment from thy Almighty Father, and may he accompany thee on thy way!"

Siegfried kiſſed his father's hand gratefully and with reverence for his wholeſome inſtruction and advice, and promiſed to bear faithfully in his mind and heart all that he had ſaid, as his beſt treaſure. His parents then embraced and kiſſed him once more, and with hurried ſteps he left their preſence and haſtened out of the hall to the green wood, over which the morning ſun was riſing in ſoft beaming ſplendour.

FOURTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried the Swift went through the Wilderneſs, and what he encountered there.

SIEGFRIED left his father's caſtle alone; his companions were all ſtill aſleep, and his two faithful dogs only followed his ſteps. He took his way up the Rhine, towards the ſouth, over green fields, through dark foreſts, and acroſs gloomy glens. The hounds bounded on before him, chaſing the beaſts of prey, and rouſing them before his ſpear. Many a poiſonous ſerpent and many a wild bird of prey the hero ſlew with his arrow and transfixed to the rocks, to mark the path that he had followed. One while he would ruſh forth like the hurricane that roars over the wooded heights; then again he would ſtand ſtill, and ſound his horn to the barking dogs, or he ſang ſome old heroic ſong or cheerful hunting-tune, till the rocks re-echoed with the ſound. The clear water of the foreſt ſtream was his drink, the beaſts he ſlew and the wild fruits were his food. At night he ſlept on his ſhield beneath the old oak trees, with his naked ſword by his ſide: at his feet lay his faithful dogs, who rouſed him whenever a beaſt of prey approached, and he roſe as ſoon as the day began to dawn.

Onward he went, blithe and joyous, but as yet he had met

with no Giant, nor the ſigns of any Dragon, for which he longed ſo much. This troubled him greatly, and he ſaid to himſelf: "My fathers, the Heroes of old, have left me a ſorry chaſe; the nobleſt game they have ſlain themſelves, and may fairly mock at me from the old pictures; I fear, in truth, that but little hero's work is left for me." So ſaying, he vented his vexation on the ſnakes and beaſts of prey, and proceeded onwards with increaſed haſte and impatience, where the trees in the ancient foreſt ſtood the thickeſt, ſo that the ſky was ſcarcely to be ſeen. Upon the ground, the roots of the trees were cloſely preſſed together, and ſo ſtrangely entwined, that Siegfried was one moment obliged to leap over and at another to creep under them.

One morning, as he was haſtening on impatiently, he came to a ſpot where the trees ſtood more apart: ſkirting this lay a ſmiling mead, adorned with varied flowers and tall graſs, through which ran a foreſt ſtream. Suddenly he heard a loud noiſe, as if ſome horſemen were daſhing through the wood; the boughs of the trees were forcibly bent back, and a ſnow-white ſtag of unuſual ſize made its appearance. The hair on its breaſt hung down with age, like a beard, and its antlers, divided into many branches, were ſo far parted from each other that the arms of a man were unable to ſtretch from end to end. What moſt excited Siegfried's aſtoniſhment was a brilliant crown of gold that the ſtag bore upon his head, as he ſtalked proudly along like the king of the foreſt. It ſeemed as if the animal

had wandered for many years in ſolitude, with the golden crown upon his head, without ſeeing the face of man; for he ſtood quietly beſide the young hero, looking ſteadfaſtly at him, as if ſtruck with wonder. Siegfried was fain to know the meaning of the crown upon the animal's head, ſo he called to his dogs to take the ſtag alive. But no ſooner did he approach than the ſtag bounded forward, followed by Siegfried along the vale, up and down, through meadows and fields, over ſtreams and rocks; and every time that the young hunter thought to catch him, the ſtag eſcaped by a freſh leap. Thus they continued the chaſe, followed by the hounds, till the wearied animal came to the edge of a precipice. Deep beneath lay an unfathomable lake. The ſtag was juſt in the act of ſpringing over, when Siegfried caught him with his right hand by the golden crown, and planting his left foot againſt his back, he pulled the ſtag towards him.

He now perceived that it was the ſame ſtag of which the ſtory had oft been told him, how his grandfather had taken it when young, and had placed the golden crown with a ſilver rim upon his head. Siegfried broke off a point from the crown, as a remembrance, and let the affrighted animal run looſe. Then he continued his courſe onwards through the wilderneſs, day after day, like a lion in queſt of prey.

It happened one evening that he was in chaſe of a bear in a deep and ſhady vale. Steep and dark roſe the rocky heights to the right and the left, while from a narrow opening beneath

roared a foreſt ſtream white with foam. The full moon had already riſen, and caſt here and there a bright gleam over the dark glen. The projecting rocks however, with their corners and points of a thouſand varied forms, half illumined, half in ſhade, looked ſo ſtrange, that Siegfried at firſt fancied them no other than real Giants and Dragons and dark figures of the night, of which the old minſtrels ſang. His ear now caught in the far diſtance, amid the noiſe of the ruſhing ſtream, the ſounds of hollow blows, as if two mighty rocks were being ſtruck and ſevered from each other. He haſtened towards the ſpot, and as he advanced they appeared to grow gradually louder and louder, until at length he ſeemed to be in the midſt of the noiſy din. Yet he fancied that they muſt proceed from the interior of the mountain; ſo he applied his ear to the ſide of the rock, and it ſeemed as if he heard rough voices diſcourſing in a language quite unintelligible to him, and yet he nowhere ſaw any entrance. Again he advanced a few yards, when ſuddenly the valley took a turn, and he found himſelf ſtanding before a high wall of blocks of ſtone; rays of light gleamed through the crevices, and black ſmoke ſtreamed forth: the wall was overgrown with foreſt-plants, and below lay enormous trunks of trees. The heavy blows of a hammer re-echoed from the interior, accompanied by a hollow, murmuring ſound of muſic, as from voices. Even the ruſhing noiſe of the neighbouring waterfall was overpowered by this ſubterranean ſong, which reſembled the wind when in the ſtillneſs of night



it howls through the hollows of the rocks, and then ſuddenly rages with a loud roar over the ocean waves and forces them on high. When Siegfried had liſtened for awhile, he climbed up to the rocky heights to ſee who dwelt there.

Through a wide opening he looked into a deep and high vaulted cavern. A dark red flame was burning upon a forge in the depths of the cave, whilſt men of a wild aſpect lifted with large pincers the glowing iron from the fire to an anvil, where they ſtruck it with heavy hammers. Through the hollow trunk of a tree the wind whiſtled into the fire, through that of another the water flowed into a veſſel of rock. The dark red flame was ſtrangely reflected in the agitated water, clear as cryſtal, and in the ſooty faces of the ſmiths. On the walls hung heavy ſwords, old and new, of various kinds, and near them were richly ornamented ſhields. In the former were reflected the red and flickering flames, in the latter the rays of the ſilent ſilver moon, and they hung there and ſhone like large lamps. Meanwhile a ſhower of ſparks was ſcattered through the cave, ſo that the black men ſeemed like evil ſpirits ſtanding in the midſt of the fiery element. They were of large make, but of greater breadth than height; their faces were black as the wall itſelf, and their eyes beamed from beneath their buſhy eyebrows like the red flames of the forge; ſtiff and briſtly, their raven black hair hung down their backs. They ſpoke not a word to each other, except when they laid the iron on the fire and ſtirred the flames.

Cloſe below Siegfried ſat one of the men, who had an ox ſpitted upon an iron ſtake before a fire; and every time the ſtake turned round, he tore off a ſlice and threw it into his vaſt mouth, to taſte whether the meat were nearly done, and inſtantly he ſwallowed it down like a ravenous wolf. As ſoon as it was ready, he took the ox from the fire, laid it on a round iron table, and cut from it with his axe as many pieces as there were men in the cavern: he laid each piece ſeparate, and a block of ſtone which ſtood near ſerved as a ſeat. Then he lighted a fir-torch and went to another part of the cave, where he ſtuck the flaming torch into the wall, and poured out the drink from huge caſks into iron jugs.

Siegfried obſerved all this, and ſaid to himſelf: "The hoſpitality of theſe people, methinks, is ſmall and ſorry enough, but their hunger is all the greater, for truly they have enormouſly wide jaws; the ſafeſt thing for me will be to take my portion at once, and leave them to ſettle the reſt among themſelves." Thereupon he ſtretched forth his ſpear towards the table, and ſeized the piece which lay neareſt him. Long before the black man returned, Siegfried with his dogs had devoured the meat.

When all was ready, the ſmith took a hammer in his hand, and ſtruck three times upon an iron ſhield, and inſtantly all the ſmiths ran each to his block of ſtone, and quickly had his piece of meat in his mouth. One of them however cried out: "Hollo, Eckhart! thou old glutton, what haſt thou done with my meat?" Eckhart looked right and left, and nowhere ſeeing

it, he ſaid in a muttering tone, " If ye ſteal the meat among you while I get ready the drink, ye may look yourſelves where it is gone."

" Thou knoweſt full well where it is gone," ſaid the hungry ſmith; " nor is this the firſt time thou haſt taken the meat and given us the bones; and if thou canſt not ſay where it is, I'll hammer that ſkull of thine until thou ſhalt recollect!" So ſaying he ſprang upon Eckhart, but another held him back, and a violent quarrel aroſe among the ſmiths. Some cried out that Eckhart had ſtolen the meat, others ſaid that ſome one elſe muſt have ſlipped away from the anvil and taken it; while Eckhart ſwore hard and faſt that he had not touched it. They grew more and more furious, and were about to come to blows with their hammers, when Siegfried ſuddenly appeared above the cave, and called on them to deſiſt. The noiſe however was ſo great, that they heeded his preſence no more than they did that of the moon, which was ſilently beaming on them.

Then Siegfried, the young hero, put his horn to his lips and blew with all his might ſo loud a blaſt, that the whole cavern reſounded and the ſhields were ſhaken on the walls. All were ſilent, as if ſtruck by lightning: but Siegfried ſaid to them, " Liſten, ye rude and ſavage fellows, I tell you that ye are fools and madmen to wrangle thus with each other, for 'tis *I* that have eaten the meat; and I now pray you to welcome and entertain me becomingly as your gueſt."

At theſe bold words the ſmiths ſtood even more aghaſt than

at the ſound of the horn; but they ſoon gave way to their rage at his preſumption, and every one ſeized and hurled at Siegfried whatever came to hand. But quickly ſnatching a heavy maſs of ſtone from the rocky wall, he caſt it with ſuch force upon the iron table that the table broke in two, and he cried, "Let none raiſe a hand more, or ye are all doomed to death, unleſs your ſkulls are harder than your iron." Then their leader commanded them to deſiſt from the ſtrife, fearing indeed that there might be ſome mighty Giant above their cave, who in his wrath would forthwith bury them within its walls; and he ordered one of the ſmiths to admit the ſtranger.

The ſmith took a hammer, puſhed away the rock from the entrance, and exclaimed, when he beheld Siegfried, "Truly I thought to ſee a Giant, and I find a Dwarf. Art thou the frog that has croaked ſo loud? What is thy name and calling, and whence comeſt thou?" Siegfried anſwered him proudly, "Thou haſt aſked me three queſtions, but haſt forgotten the fourth—whether it pleaſes me to anſwer thee one of them? If however a better one than thou inquire, tell him that my calling is to carry a ſharp ſword, to ſilence inſolent fellows, of whom thou ſeemeſt to be one: a name I have not yet gotten, but I am come to win one; and if thou wouldſt know the road to my ſire's caſtle, the wild beaſts and birds of prey that I have hung upon the trees and fixed to the rocks in my way hither will ſhow it thee."

"Ha! doſt thou blow again ſo ſtoutly on thy horn?" an-

ſwered the ſmith; "I fain would try if thy ſword is really better than my hammer." So ſaying, he ſwung his hammer round, and aimed a deadly blow at Siegfried's head; but the young hero met it with his truſty ſword, whoſe edge cleft the handle in twain, ſo that the iron maſs fell to the earth. The ſmith now hurried into the cavern, followed by Siegfried and his dogs. But here Siegfried was attacked by the furious Eckhart, who ruſhed upon the undaunted hero, and aimed a blow at his cheek with the maſſy tongs; ere the blow reached him, however, Siegfried ſeized him with his left hand by his briſtly hair, and threw him on the ground. All the ſmiths now fell upon the intrepid youth, to reſcue their companion Eckhart; but Siegfried held him firmly by the hair, and ran with him round the cavern, followed by the ſmiths. But his ſword, which he wielded with his right hand, kept them off, whilſt his truſty dogs ſprang barking at their throats and dragged them down. The whole mountain trembled with the ſounds of fury, and it ſeemed as if the ſavage hoſt within the cavern were engaged in ſome wild marriage-dance: at length the leader of the ſmiths commanded peace, and then turning angrily to Siegfried exclaimed: "Hear me, thou art in truth a moſt ill-mannered gueſt; firſt thou ſtealeſt our meal, and then draweſt thy ſword upon one of our comrades." Siegfried anſwered him proudly, "Truly it does thee little honour to make ſuch war upon a gueſt about the bone of an ox; for in faith I give thee leave to throw me into yonder fire and burn me to aſhes, if by tomor-

row's dawn I bring thee not in its ſtead an entire urochs. And if thou wilt teach me the art of forging weapons, I will ſerve thee truly, and thy ſpit ſhall never want ſupplies from the foreſt."

This offer ſeemed to pleaſe the Maſter better, and he bade Siegfried welcome; then they all ſat down together, and were ſoon as good friends as if nothing happened.

FIFTH ADVENTURE.

Mimer relates the Adventures of Wieland, the beſt of all Smiths and Armourers.

SIEGFRIED took his ſeat boldly, among the ſmiths, and had an anſwer for every queſtion, as if he had grown up among them in the ſmoky cavern. Mimer imagined he had gained in Siegfried a good workman, and told him that if he ſerved him well he would make him as clever a ſmith as Wieland, the beſt of all armourers. Then Siegfried aſked him who this Wieland was, and what he had produced. But Mimer replied in ſurpriſe, "Thou ſeemeſt to me not to have long crawled out of thy neſt, if thou knoweſt not of Wieland, of whom every one has heard. But that is a long and wondrous hiſtory, and we have no time for it to-day;

for Wieland forged ſo many ſkilful things, that one can ſcarcely even tell of them."

Siegfried begged him again with great earneſtneſs, and promiſed to bring him the fatteſt urochs of the foreſts far around. "Well then," ſaid Mimer, "I will tell thee of Wieland; but remember, if thou keepeſt not thy word, I'll fix thee with my own hands to the higheſt rock, where thou ſhalt remain until the eagles and vultures bear thee away piecemeal." Siegfried laughed at this threat, and Mimer began as follows.

"Wieland, the moſt famous of all armourers, came from Zealand; his father was named Wade, and he was of the race of the Giants. He was once told that two Dwarfs lived in a hollow mountain, who underſtood everything that heart could deſire to know, and were able to work in iron and ſilver and gold better than any one elſe. So Wade, the old Giant, took his ſon Wieland and went with him to ſeek the little Dwarfs in the mountain. On their way they came to a river, but neither boat nor ferryman was to be ſeen: ſo after waiting a long time, the old Giant's patience became exhauſted, and he placed young Wieland on his ſhoulder and carried him acroſs the river. The river was five fathoms deep, and yet the water ſcarcely reached the hem of his girdle.

"Thus they came ſafely to the ſkilful Dwarfs, and the old man gave them his ſon to inſtruct, and agreed to give them a mark of gold for twelve months. At parting he charged his ſon to be attentive and induſtrious, and then returned home.

After the expiration of a twelvemonth he came again, and Wieland had ſerved the Dwarfs ſo truly, and had become ſo clever, that they would not part with him. They begged the Giant to leave the boy twelve months longer, and they would return him his mark of gold, and teach Wieland twice as many arts. The old father thought this a good offer, and accepted it; but afterwards the Dwarfs repented having bought his ſervices ſo dear, and they required that if the Giant returned not on the appointed day they ſhould be free to cut off his ſon's head. The Giant agreed to this alſo; but at parting he called to his ſon to accompany him part of the way. On emerging from the mine, they proceeded a ſhort diſtance, when the father ſtopped, and plunging his ſword into a bog, covered with bruſhwood, ſaid, 'If I return not on the appointed day, and the Dwarfs ſeek thy life, take this ſword and defend thyſelf like a man; for that were better than that thou ſhouldſt be miſerably murdered by two ſuch diminutive wretches. Nevertheleſs I cannot but think that I ſhall return before the appointed day.' The father and ſon parted, and ſaw one another no more.

"Wieland learned all the other arts of the Dwarfs; they were however much diſpleaſed at this, but conſoled themſelves with reflecting that this ſkill would be of no great uſe to him, ſince his head was in their power.

"When the twelve months were drawing to a cloſe, the old Giant was anxious to go to his ſon rather too ſoon than too late, for the way was long, and he feared to miſs the appointed time.

He therefore ſet out on his journey and travelled day and night until he came to the hollow mountain; and this was three days earlier than the time agreed upon. But he found the mountain cloſed; ſo, feeling extremely tired, he laid himſelf down to reſt until it was opened, and immediately ſank into a deep ſlumber. As he lay upon the hard rock, ſnoring ſo loud that the branches of the trees ſhook, the ſky grew dark, a thick cloud burſt, an earthquake ſhattered the mountain, and a cliff became looſened and fell, drowning the ſleeper in the guſhing waters, and burying him amidſt the falling rocks and trees. Wade, the old Giant, never awoke again: ſome, however, ſay he is not yet dead, and that at times you may hear him breathe plainly, and that the whole remaining portion of the mountain trembles when he turns himſelf round.

"The Dwarfs opened the mountain on the appointed day, and Wieland went up to ſeek his father. He could nowhere find him, and when he came to the cliff and perceived the fall he gueſſed what had happened. He inſtantly took the ſword from out of the bog, returned into the mine, and ſlew the two Dwarfs. Then he collected together all his tools, and all the gold and ſilver he could find, and placing them on a horſe, journeyed northwards to Denmark.

"After three days he came to the Weſer, and for a long time knew not how he ſhould get over the deep ſtream. At length he felled a lofty tree, hollowed it out, and placed on the top his tools, together with the gold and ſilver; beneath theſe

he laid his proviſions, and then made himſelf windows of the ſkins of beaſts and bark of trees, which were ſo thick that no water could penetrate them. Then he ſlipt himſelf in between, and moved about until the tree rolled down the ſmooth bank into the ſtream.

" For eighteen days in the trunk of this tree he continued his courſe down the ſtream before he reached the land, which happened juſt when King Nidung's people were rowing about on the ſea with nets, to catch fiſh for their royal maſter's table. When the fiſhermen drew in their nets, theſe were ſo heavy that they fancied they had caught ſome monſtrous fiſh. But when they ſaw the tree, cut out ſo ſkilfully, they ran in haſte to the King to inform him of the circumſtance.

" The King came himſelf, and ordered the tree to be cut aſunder, to ſee what was inſide. So they forthwith ſet to work with their axes. Wieland however, who was liſtening inſide the tree, was not a little afraid leſt they might hit him a fatal blow; ſo he called to them to deſiſt, ſaying there was a man inſide. When the people heard the tree ſpeak with a human voice, they thought the evil ſpirit himſelf was lodging in the wood, and ran away as faſt as their legs would carry them.

" Wieland now opened the tree himſelf, went to the King and requeſting protection for his life, offered him his ſervices. The King ſaw quickly that he was a ſtranger, and a man to command attention, and not a poor wretch or wandering beggar: he therefore granted his requeſt, although the way in which he

had been taken like a fiſh in a net appeared to him ſtrange and wondrous. Wieland haſtened back to his tree, and buried it, together with all his tools and property contained therein; but one of the king's men, named Reigin, ſaw him by chance while thus engaged.

" Then Wieland ſerved the King faithfully and well for a year; his duty was to have under his care and inſpection the three knives which lay on the table before the king. He went one day to the ſeaſhore, and while he was waſhing theſe three knives, the beſt of them fell from his hand into the ſea and was loſt. He was much troubled at this, ſince he could not diſcharge even ſo ſimple an office. Then he went in haſte to Amilias, the King's ſmith, but found him not, for he was gone to luncheon with his companions, and the ſmithy was empty. So Wieland went to the forge himſelf, and, unſeen by any human being, he made a knife ſimilar to the one he had loſt: whereupon he went and ſtood before the King's table, and appeared as if nothing had happened.

" Preſently the King took up the new knife, and was about to cut with it a loaf of bread which lay before him on the table, when the knife went completely through the loaf and cut a piece out of the table on which the loaf lay. The King, in aſtoniſhment, inquired who had made that knife. Wieland replied, ' Who elſe but Amilias, your ſmith, who has made all your knives, and everything elſe that you have cauſed to be forged? Amilias confirmed what he ſaid. But the King an-

ſwered, 'Amilias cannot make ſo good a blade;' and he threatened Wieland with his wrath if he did not tell him the truth. Then he confeſſed to the King all that had happened, and the King ſaid he knew full well that Amilias could not produce ſuch workmanſhip. This ſeemed to Amilias to convey a great reproach and inſult, and he roſe up in anger and declared that he would challenge the ſtranger to forge with him; and all ſhould then ſee which of the two was the better ſkilled in the art. Then the King commanded it to be ſo, and it was agreed that Amilias ſhould make a helmet, with a breaſtplate and leggings of mail, and that Wieland ſhould make a ſword, and whoſoever's work was beſt ſhould have power to cut off the other's head. For the performance of the taſk each was to be allowed the ſpace of a twelvemonth. Two of the chief ſervingmen of the King ſtood up and bound themſelves as ſureties for Amilias, whoſe ſkill was ſo well known that it was thought impoſſible he ſhould fail; whilſt no one would venture to ſtand ſurety for the ſtranger Wieland, until at length the King himſelf pledged his word for him.

" That very day Amilias proceeded to his ſmithy with all his workmen, and began to labour at his work, and continued thus from day to day until the twelve months were ended. Wieland, on the other hand, waited every day at the King's table, and ſeemed as if he had heard nothing of the affair. Thus paſſed an entire half year, when the King one day aſked him how he thought to gain his wager. Wieland replied, that if the King

were pleaſed to command, he was ready to begin at once; and he forthwith went to the ſpot where he had buried his tree. But this was broken up, and all his tools, together with the gold and ſilver, taken out.

"As he ſtood in trouble and perplexity, looking into the water, he remembered the man who had obſerved him whilſt engaged in burying the tree; but he knew not his name. So he went ſtraight to the King, told him the whole ſtory, and added, that he was ſure he ſhould recollect the man if he were to ſee him again. Thereupon the King ſaid he would ſee to this; ſo he ſummoned an aſſemblage of his people, and collected together all the men in his kingdom; but none knew the meaning of the royal ſummons. Then Wieland ſtood at the entrance and watched each as he arrived.

"When the King had diſmiſſed the aſſembly, Wieland went to him and ſaid, that among thoſe preſent he had neither ſeen the man himſelf nor any one like him. Whereat King Nidung waxed exceeding wrath, and ſaid, that Wieland was not ſo clever as he had taken him to be, but he found that he was a daring and preſumptuous fool; and he had been himſelf a fool for undertaking to anſwer for him, and for having ſummoned the meeting, as the man in queſt muſt ſurely have been there. So Wieland not only loſt all his tools and wealth, but had alſo brought upon himſelf the King's diſpleaſure, which troubled him ſtill more.

"In this ſtrait he went ſecretly and forged the image of

a man. He put hair upon its head, painted it, and dreſſed it exactly as if it were a man that ſtood there: for the Dwarfs had alſo taught him this art. As ſoon as the figure was completed, he placed it one evening in a ſpot which the King would have to paſs in going from the hall to his chamber. When it was time to go to reſt, and the King came to this ſpot, followed by his attendants, he exclaimed in aſtoniſhment, 'Welcome, Reigin! wherefore do you ſtand ſo lonely there outſide? how fares it with your embaſſy to Sweden?" The man however was ſilent —he anſwered not a word. The King was about to queſtion him again, when Wieland, who bare the torch, ſaid, 'Truly, ſire, this man is bold and haughty, he will never anſwer you, for I made him, and he it is who ſtole my tools.' Then the King laughed at the image, and ſaid, 'Nay, in truth, he could not have come to the meeting.' And when Reigin ſoon afterwards returned from his embaſſy, he reſtored at once to Wieland, by the King's command, everything he had taken, ſaying that he had only done it in jeſt.

"Wieland meanwhile continued to ſtand each day at table behind the King, and ſerved him, and did as if he had nothing elſe to think of, and thus paſſed other four months. Then the King warned him again, till he went to his ſmithy and began his work. Three times he made a ſword, and every time he brought it to the King it ſeemed to him the beſt ſword he had ever ſeen. But Wieland every time replied, that it was not yet good enough; and then he went again to

his forge and filed it down, and made a new one of it, much better than the former. When he came to the King the third time, the ſword gleamed as brightly as a diamond; it was ſet with gold, and had a beautiful handle. Then he went with the King to the river, threw in a flock of wool, which was three feet thick, and held the ſword in the water ſtill and ſteadily againſt the ſtream; and when the wool reached the ſword, its edge cut it as eaſily as it did the water itſelf. On ſeeing this, King Nidung ſaid with delight, that in future he would have no other ſword than this in battle, for never a better could be found on earth. Whereupon Wieland replied, that he had rather the King ſhould have it than any one elſe, but he muſt firſt make the ſheath and belt. So the King conſented, and Wieland went to the ſmithy, and made a ſecond ſword ſo like the other that no one could diſtinguiſh them. The good one he hid under the bellows of his forge, ſaying, 'Lay there, my good ſword, Mimmung! who knows whether I may not want thee ere long?'

"From this time forward he ſtood day by day before the King's table, until at length the appointed day arrived. Amilias took his helmet and ſuit-of-mail early in the morning, put them on, and paraded with them up and down through the ſtreets and market, before the aſtoniſhed people. The armour was ſo ſtrong and beautifully wrought, that all who ſaw it ſaid they had never beheld the like. At the King's table it was much admired, and Amilias was aſſured he could not fail to win the wager.

" When they roſe from table, the King went with all his gueſts to a meadow, and Amilias ſeated himſelf, in the midſt of an eager crowd of ſpectators, on a broad ſtone ſeat.

" Wieland now haſtened to his ſmithy, took his good ſword Mimmung, and went with it behind the ſeat on which Amilias, the ſmith of King Nidung ſat. Then he laid the edge of his ſword on the ſtout helmet of Amilias, and aſked him whether he felt anything; to which Amilias replied, that he felt nothing at all, and bade him cut with all his might; for that truly it muſt be a mighty marvel if he could injure his invulnerable helmet. Wieland then preſſed upon his ſword, and it cut ſo forcibly that at one ſtroke it penetrated through helmet and head, armour and body, down to his rival's girdle. Whereupon he aſked Amilias again, if he ſtill felt nothing; and Amilias replied that he felt as if cold water were ſtreaming over his body. ' Well then,' ſaid Wieland, ' now ſtand up and ſhake thyſelf, and then thou wilt ſee how thou art.' Now when Amilias ſhook himſelf, he fell in two pieces on either ſide of his ſeat, and never roſe again; for there was no ſmith ſo clever as to be able to join the two parts. After this proof the King deſired to have the ſword of Wieland; but Wieland was cunning, and replied that he would firſt dry it, and fetch the ſheath from the ſmithy; ſo he went and brought the King the falſe ſword from the forge, but he hid Mimmung again under the bellows.

" After this Wieland remained for a long time with the



King: he made for him all ſorts of curioſities, in gold and ſilver and other metals, ſo that the fame of his ſkill ſpread far and wide. Things went on thus until a foreign army attacked the country of King Nidung, and the King took the field with his men: Wieland alſo girded on his good ſword and went with him. And it happened on one occaſion in the battle that the King was in great peril. No one came to his aid, and at length he promiſed to give his daughter to whoſoever ſhould aſſiſt him. Then Wieland, the clever ſmith, came to his aid, and performed the ſervice required, and obtained for him the victory over his enemy. But the King, inſtead of keeping his promiſe, pretended to know nothing of it, and drove his deliverer in disgrace and ſhame like a dog from his court.

"Wieland burned with indignation againſt the King at this treatment, and returned after ſome time in diſguiſe to the court. He went into the kitchen of the palace, gave himſelf out for a cook, and aſſiſted the other cooks in preparing the food for the King's table. When the diſhes were placed before the King and his daughter, the latter took a knife to carve a diſh that ſtood before her. The knife however had this property, that its handle gave a ſound if the diſh was poiſoned; and this ſound was now heard. Search was everywhere made to diſcover the criminal, but all in vain. Wieland laughed to himſelf, ſeeing that no one knew him, and went ſecretly to the table, took the knife, and laid another exactly like it in its place. Then he prepared a freſh diſh, and poured over it ſuch a magic ſyrup,

that if the maiden had eaten of it, the effect would have been to make her think it impoſſible to live without Wieland for her huſband. The King's daughter however had conceived ſome ſuſpicion, and held her knife to the diſh, but it gave no ſound. As ſhe was ſtill in doubt, ſhe ordered another diſh of poiſoned meat to be brought, and as her knife would not ſound, ſhe ſaw plainly that there was ſome deception practiſed.

" Thereupon the King was angry, and ſaid, ' No one can ſo ſkilfully have imitated this knife as Wieland:' ſo he cauſed him to be ſought for among his people. At laſt they found him, and brought him before the King, who as a puniſhment ordered the tendons of both his feet to be cut, ſo that he could not get away. From that time he ſat conſtantly in his ſmithy, and contrived all kinds of ingenious work for the King, but all the while meditating in his heart day and night the means of his revenge.

" At this time he ſent for his brother Eigil, who could ſhoot with the bow better than any other man, and had won great fame in this art. Eigil came, and on account of his ſkill was well received by the King. One day, however, the King was deſirous to ſee if Eigil could really ſhoot as well as he had been told: ſo he cauſed Eigil's ſon, a boy of three years old, to be brought, and an apple laid upon his head, and then ordered Eigil to ſhoot away the apple. Although the King would grant him only one ſhot, yet he took three arrows from his quiver, and placing one arrow on the ſtring, and taking his

aim, he ſhot through the apple, which fell in halves. The King praiſed the ſhot, but aſked him why he had taken three arrows for one ſhot? Eigil anſwered fearleſſly, 'Sire, I will not deceive thee; know then that, had I not hit the apple with the one, the other two were deſtined for thee.' The King received this ſpeech well, but all the others thought that Eigil had ſpoken very boldly.

"Wieland meantime ſat in his ſmithy hammering away, and at every ſtroke of his hammer he uttered a curſe againſt the King; until one day the two youngeſt ſons of King Nidung came to him in the ſmithy with their bows, and begged him to make them ſome arrows. Wieland anſwered that he had no time: in vain they begged him again and again; until, at length, he promiſed to grant their requeſt, if they would do him a little favour in return, namely, that when the ſnow had juſt fallen, they ſhould come walking backwards into his ſmithy, and then he would ſhow them a trick. The boys promiſed to do ſo, and ſcarcely had the firſt ſnow fallen when they came eagerly to the ſmithy. Wieland however took them and plunged a knife into their hearts, and buried them in a deep hole beneath his bellows. They were miſſed the ſame morning; the King thought they were gone into the woods to ſhoot wild beaſts, or to the ſeaſide to fiſh; but when dinner-time came, and they did not appear, people were ſent out to ſeek them in every direction. They came to Wieland, and aſked if the boys had not been with him; and Wieland replied that they had been

with him indeed, but had long ſince gone away to the Königſburg. The meſſengers perceived footſteps in the ſnow in the direction of home; no one had ſuſpicion of Wieland, and it was ſuppoſed that the boys had been torn to pieces by wild beaſts, or drowned in the ſea. After a time, when the matter was forgotten, Wieland took the boys from the hole, ſcraped the fleſh from their bones, then took their ſkulls, ſet them in gold and ſilver, and made them into two large drinking-cups; then of their ſhoulder-blades and hip-bones he made oil-cups; the other bones he made into knife-handles and pipes. The King was delighted with theſe treaſures, and only had them placed on the table when he had perſons of diſtinction as his gueſts.

" Wieland laughed to himſelf at the King's delight, and thinking that he was now ſufficiently revenged, he began to conſider how he could return home. Then he begged his brother Eigil to get him all kinds of feathers; ſo Eigil went ſtraightways into the woods, and ſhot all the birds he could find, great and ſmall. Wieland made himſelf a winged coat of the feathers, which looked exactly like the ſkin ſtript off a large eagle. Then he told Eigil to put on this covering and try it. 'Fly high and low, as you will,' he ſaid, 'only in alighting go before the wind.' Eigil did as his brother told him, and flew aloft in the air like the ſwifteſt bird; but when he wiſhed to alight, he fell headlong with ſuch violence as to loſe his ſight and hearing. Wieland aſked him if anything were wanting to

his coat of feathers, that he had thus fallen. ‘ If it were as eaſy to alight as to aſcend,’ replied Eigil, ‘ thou wouldſt never more have ſeen me again, and I ſhould now be in another land.’ Wieland laughed as he put the feathery covering on himſelf, and ſaid, ‘ Well I knew that thou wouldſt never bring it me again, and therefore it was that I bade thee alight before the wind; for all the birds alight againſt the wind.’ Then he added, that he would forthwith fly home himſelf, but he deſired firſt to take leave of the King; and if the King ſhould command Eigil to ſhoot at him as he flew, he begged him, as he loved him as a brother, to aim ſtraight at his heart.

“ The two brothers now took leave of each other, and Wieland roſe into the air and flew to the higheſt tower, and cried aloud, ſo that every one could hear him far and wide, praying the King to come forth, for he had ſomething to ſay to him.

“ Then the King came with all his attendants, and ſaid, ‘ What! art thou now become a bird, Wieland? What is thy deſire, and whither art thou flying? What new miracle is this?’ ‘ Ay, ſire,’ anſwered Wieland, laughing, ‘ I am a bird now, and about to fly from hence, that thou, treacherous King, mayſt no longer have me in thy power.’ Thereupon he began to mock at the King, and told him how he had appeaſed his revenge, until the King grew frantic with rage; and when Wieland flew on high he turned to Eigil, exclaiming, ‘ Come, my good Eigil, thou beſt of ſhots, ſend thy arrows after him,

that he may not eſcape alive.' To which Eigil replied, that he would not ſhoot his own brother: but the King threatened him with inſtant death unleſs he did as he commanded. Then Eigil laid his arrow on the bowſtring, and aimed ſtraight at his brother's heart. But Wieland held his hammer in his right hand before his heart, and as the arrow rebounded againſt it, he ſeized it with his left. Eigil was commanded to ſhoot again, but Wieland did as before, and flew away, laughing ſcornfully, and holding an arrow in each hand. The King and all his people praiſed Eigil for his ſkill in aiming ſo well; but they were ſtill more aſtoniſhed at Wieland's dexterity, ſaying they had never ſeen the like. Meanwhile he reached his father's home in Seeland, ſafe and ſound,—what afterwards became of him I know not. But it has now grown late, and it is time for us to go to reſt."

Mimer's tale was now ended, and he aſked Siegfried how it had pleaſed him, and whether he wiſhed to become as good a ſmith as Wieland. Siegfried replied, "What pleaſes me moſt is the ſword Mimmung; as to the coat of feathers, I do not need it, for I have no thought of flying from man or beaſt. Still methinks that Wieland won but little honour with all his ſkill. He treacherouſly ſlew his maſters, the clever Dwarfs, and if in return for this King Nidung was treacherous to him, he revenged himſelf cruelly and craftily on his poor and innocent children; nor truly doth his flight and ſcornful laughing beſeem a hero. But had he encountered my ſword, I would not have



ſat ſo quietly to him as Amilias, the ſilly ſmith of King Nidung: nor ſhould his hammer have availed him much againſt my arrows. But if thou teacheſt me to make a ſword like the good Mimmung ſword, none ſhall harm a hair of thy head; and thou mayſt hang up all the precious ſtones and crowns in the world on the trees before thy ſmithy, and no one on earth ſhall dare to ſtretch out his hand to take them."

"That we will ſee tomorrow," replied Mimer; "we ſhall then try whether you can uſe your hammer as well as you can your tongue; but now you muſt go to reſt, for it is midnight, and early in the morning we ſhall be ſtrong and freſh for work." Thereupon they all lay down to reſt upon their ſkins of wild beaſts; but Siegfried repoſed upon his ſhield between his two dogs, whom he bound to the handle of his ſpear, and he ſlept as ſoundly and tranquilly as if he had been at home in his father's caſtle.

SIXTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried brings an Urochs to the Smiths.

EARLY the next morning, when the firſt rays of the ſun gleamed upon the ſooty faces of the ſleeping ſmiths, Siegfried ſprang up from his ſhield and ſtarted off with his dogs to hunt in the foreſt. He traverſed hill and dale until he came on the track of an

urochs; his dogs purſued it eagerly, and barked louder and louder as they approached the animal. Siegfried haſtened on, and came up juſt as the urochs was ruſhing upon one of the dogs, while the other hound clung faſt to its ear. The furious beaſt lifted one dog upon its horns and toſſed it far behind him amidſt the trees, whilſt the other dog fell ſtunned upon the ground between the animal's feet.

The beaſt now ſaw the Hero advancing againſt him: at firſt he tore up the earth with his fore feet, wild with rage; then he ſtood ſtill, meaſuring the ſtripling with glaring eyes, and preſently daſhed with fury at him.

Siegfried ſprang aſide, ſeized the creature's horns with both his hands and forced back his fallen head, till the beaſt reared up and was forced to ſtand firm and upright, as if life had departed from him. Thus Siegfried led him to the ſmithy. When he came before the cavern's mouth, he cried aloud, "Wake up! wake up, and receive what I promiſed you yeſterday." So ſaying he thruſt the beaſt into the cave, ſtruck aſide the ſtone, and placed himſelf in the opening to ſee what was paſſing.

The ſmiths leaped from their beds in conſternation at the ſight of the monſtrous beaſt, and each ran to ſome place of ſafety. Some jumped aloft, and held faſt on the ſhields and nails in the wall, others placed themſelves behind an anvil; one ſprang upon the forge, and another crept haſtily and hid himſelf in the aſhes beneath.

The maſter alone ſnatched a ſhield from the wall, and placed himſelf with a heavy hammer in the centre of the cavern, facing the urochs. The animal at firſt ſtood ſtill, as if in amazement at the ſtrange ſcene, and looked around; then he ran furiouſly at the maſter, while Siegfried blew a luſty hunting ſtrain on his horn. Before the maſter could ſwing his hammer he was laid proſtrate on the ground under his ſhield. The beaſt now ruſhed at thoſe who ſtood trembling behind the anvil, but they ran right and left, climbing along the wall to the entrance. The urochs in his fury toſſed aſide the anvil, and ſtood ſtill before the forge, pawing the ground with his feet, and watching an opportunity to attack the man who ſtood upon the forge. Then the beaſt bellowed aloud with fury, and the man ſhrieked with fear; while Siegfried blew a merry ſtrain as an accompaniment to the dance. The maſter having now recovered a little from his fall, ſtept behind the beaſt, and ſtriking its ſkull with the ſharp end of the hammer, it fell dead upon the ground.

SEVENTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried learns to be a Smith, and how he was ſent by the treacherous Mimer to the Dragon.

ALL now haſtened up, and Mimer the maſter ſaid angrily to Siegfried, "Another time, rather take from us than give to us, for the ſecond was worſe than the firſt." "Be not ſo angry, Maſter Smith," anſwered Siegfried, "I thought the urochs could better run to thee than I could drag him, and moreover I imagined it would be good ſport for thee to give him his death-blow. Perhaps I may be able to make thee amends in the ſmithy, and produce ſomething uſeful to thee." "If thou doſt that, thou ſhalt have our praiſe," replied the maſter; "but we will try at once what thou canſt do." Thereupon he ſeated himſelf before the forge, took a maſſy piece of iron, held it in the fire, and gave a weighty hammer that he could ſcarcely lift into Siegfried's hand.

When the iron was red hot, he took it out, laid it on the anvil, and bade Siegfried ſtrike it. At the firſt blow that Siegfried ſtruck, the ſtone which ſupported the anvil ſplit in two, and the anvil ſank into the earth; the iron and pincers too which Mimer held with both his hands flew in pieces, and the head of the hammer flew off into a corner of the cavern. Then



ſaid Mimer in amazement, but with increaſed wrath, " Never have I ſeen ſuch a fearful, yet clumſy blow ſtruck; whoever thou art, it is clear that thou wilt never do for our work." But Siegfried replied, " Did any man ever become a good ſhot at the firſt aim? what does not happen to-day, happens to-morrow; therefore I pray be not ſoured in temper." Then Mimer was ſilent, for he thought only how he might deſtroy Siegfried, believing that he was of the race of heroes,—a young wolf with ſharp teeth, who would bring no good to him and his race.

Now Mimer the ſmith had a comrade whoſe mind was filled with impiety and vice; whatever he touched produced poiſonous fruit, and to foſter this was his ſole delight. Therefore the curſe had ſtruck him, and he could only crawl about on his hands and knees in the form of a terrible dragon.

Then Mimer conſidered how he could beſt get rid of the ſtout young hero, and the idea occurred to his mind of ſending him to his comrade for inſtruction. So he ſaid to Siegfried, " Liſten, my bold young friend, you have done nothing as yet in our art; if you wiſh to learn how to make a good and truſty ſword, you muſt firſt go to the woods, and begin by charcoal-burning." Siegfried was well content, and promiſed to do as he was deſired, for his heart never dreamt of malice or evil.

EIGHTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried fights with the Dragon and bathes himſelf in his Blood.

MIMER now prepared Siegfried for the journey, and gave him meat and drink for the days that he was to be abſent, which the Hero ſecured under his ſhield. Mimer alſo gave him an axe, and then ſhowed him the way to the wood, where he intended to accompliſh his deſtruction.

When Siegfried had come to the ſpot which the falſe maſter had deſcribed to him, he halted; then he went up to the trees, gave each a blow with the axe which he held in his right hand, and bending them down with his left, he thus felled them. After awhile he carried away the trees, and piling them up in a heap he made a great fire. The ſun was now at the meridian; ſo he had recourſe to his ſtock of proviſions, and never left off until he had finiſhed all the ſupply that Mimer had given him, for his chaſe through the foreſts after Giants and Dragons had given a keen edge to his appetite. After this refreſhment he ſaid to himſelf, as he ſat on the ſtump of an old oak tree, "There is now no one ſo ſtrong as to lift a ſpear againſt me, but he would preſently lie ſtretched at his length upon the ground, and never deſire to riſe again." As he ſaid this, the

huge Dragon came crawling forth, with a mouth that was wide enough to ſwallow a man, fleſh and bones and all. It had black wings like a bat, its body was ſwollen with poiſon, and reſembled a toad, but its long tail was as ſharp as a two-edged ſword.

When Siegfried ſaw the monſter with his ſharp white teeth, he was as delighted as if a long looked for friend were coming; and he cried, "Now I may have a chance of trying my prowess as I wiſhed!" Thereupon he ran to the fire, ſeized the largeſt tree, and haſtily attacked the fierce creature with the burning brand. He ruſhed headlong upon him, and forced the flaming point ſtraight into his right eye, ſo that the beaſt writhed with the anguiſh. Then Siegfried ſtruck him on the head with ſuch force, that at the firſt ſtroke he fell proſtrate on the earth; and then he gave him repeated blows until the monſter was dead.

Siegfried now ſat down to reſt, and ſaid chuckling to himſelf, "If the Dragons can do no more than this creature here, it is hardly worth the trouble to attack them." He had however grown hungry again from this new toil, and he felt as if he had all this time eaten nothing; but it was now growing dark; he had no wiſh to return to the ſmithy, and knew not where to procure food. At laſt he bethought him to roaſt the heart of the Dragon for his ſupper. So he went at once to work, and thruſt his ſpear down the creature's jaws and body; the trunk of a large tree ſerved for a ſpit, and on it he hung the Dragon with his ſpear before the fire. But preſently the

ſcaly coat began to ſoften before the fire, and the blood and fat flowed in a ſtream like melted lead. Siegfried took the fleſh of the creature in his hand, but it burned his fingers and he put them to his mouth to cool them. But when the horn became cold in his mouth it ſeemed as if he were biting into ſteel, it had become ſo hard. He looked at his fingers, and they were covered with horn, as with gloves of iron. When the young Hero beheld this he felt rejoiced: and quickly throwing off his clothing, he held his helmet under the melting ſcales till it had grown hard, and then bathed himſelf in the ſtream which flowed from the Dragon.

The horn covered his whole body except the back, between the two ſhoulders, where a leaf of the lime-tree had fallen, which the horn could not penetrate. This horn was like a ſtrong coat of armour, which no weapon could penetrate, except between the ſhoulders where the lime leaf had fallen. And from this horny covering the hero is called Siegfried the Horny to the preſent day.

Then he took up an axe and cut the Dragon in pieces; part he gave to his dogs, and the reſt he threw to the birds of prey; the head he put aſide. Then he lay down again to take his meal, and the birds of the foreſt ſung their evening ſong. He cut out the heart of the beaſt with his ſword, and behold! while he was eating, there reſounded many voices as if of men around him; whereupon he turned, and was about to invite them to his meal, but he ſaw nothing but trees, and birds which

were hopping from bough to bough and ſeeking a place of reſt. He now perceived that the voices he heard could come only from the birds; and he remembered that he had once heard an old ballad ſung by a foreign minſtrel, in which it was ſaid that whoever ate the heart of a Dragon ſhould inſtantly learn the language of the birds, and thus learn many a ſecret. He therefore deſiſted from eating and liſtened to the voices of the birds.

Preſently a quail cried out to her ſiſter, "Bilderick! Succeſs! Succeſs! the Dragon is conquered and killed! killed!" As ſhe was crying thus, a chaffinch came flying by; he had not underſtood the quail clearly, and cried, "What, what, what? the Dragon conquered! Victory, victory, victory!" A blackbird whiſtled, "Yes, yes, only think of it! Siegfried has done it; hail to thee, Siegfried, Siegfried, Siegfried!" With him came three old ravens and ſeated themſelves croaking on the bough of a withered oak; the firſt ſaid to the ſecond, "Alas! alas! thou haſt again deceived us, ſiſter; didſt thou not ſay that we ſhould find Siegfried dead?" "Yes," replied the other, "I heard myſelf this morning how Mimer laughed at Siegfried, and ſaid, 'Go, proud boy, the ravens will ſoon fly off with thy bones: the Dragon will help thee to burn coals.' Thus ſaid Mimer, and if Siegfried's arm had not been ſtronger than his underſtanding, it would have turned out ſo." Thereupon the third raven began, "I am afraid there will not be much for us here, for Siegfried's dogs leave little behind. However we muſt not deſpair; we ſhall ſtill all be able to pick out his eyes,

for he is too confiding, and truſts too much in men, otherwiſe he would have ſeen from Mimer's evil eyes that he meant him no good. If Siegfried does not take care, the other will plant his iron in his heart yet." "Ay, but if he is wiſe," replied the firſt raven, "he will cut off Mimer's head in time." "That I ſhould be ſorry for," ſaid the third, "for he has given us many a good feaſt from dead bodies; but let us fly away before the ſun ſets, for yonder in the foreſt I know of a fallen ſtag,—let us go and enjoy it together." The two others accepted the invitation, and they all flew away together with a loud croak. Meantime the little birds had all become ſilent. Siegfried, with his dogs, continued his ſupper in peace; then he went to a clear ſtream, where he drank, and laid himſelf down to ſleep under an oak, reſting, according to his cuſtom, upon his ſhield. And when he looked up at the huge trunk of the tree, and ſaw its wide and leafy branches, and how the winds of evening played around its top, and the ſtars ſhone through its boughs; how the birds found reſt in its covering and the animals lay beneath its ſhelter, and the branches were ranged around its ſtem—and when he further reflected how many a tempeſt and ſtorm it had defied, and that it now overſhadowed the land like a king—then Siegfried thought how he ſhould like to ſtand like an oak among men, lending ſhade and protection to all around;—and with this thought he fell aſleep.

NINTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried comes again to the Smithy, and ſettles Accounts with Mimer.

NEXT morning early, when the birds of the foreſt, large and ſmall, hailed the young day with their joyous ſong, Siegfried aroſe, ſtuck the head of the Dragon on the point of his ſpear, and went ſtraight back to the ſmithy. Mimer and his companions heard from afar the barking of dogs, the ruſtling of the buſhes and the ſteps of the hero as he approached. They all came running out before the cave, and Eckhart ſaid to Mimer, "Ay, maſter, here comes Siegfried, and on his lance he bears the Dragon's head. Now he will ſerve us as he has done the Dragon—I ſhall ſtay no longer."

"What! you cowardly fellows," anſwered the angry maſter, "go back immediately into the cave and put the large hammer in the fire. Then we will place ourſelves at the entrance to welcome him, and brand the boy on his fair forehead with the red-hot iron if he makes aught ado."

"Nay," replied Eckhart, "I will have nothing more to do with him, unleſs he were to lie aſleep before me, ſo that I could drive a wedge into his head before he awaked! but ſee,

here he comes in great anger! we are twelve in number, it is true, but were we half as many more, nothing could help us but the ſwiftneſs of our legs." So ſaying, Eckhart ran away the firſt into the thicket, and all the others after him.

Mimer remained alone, curſing and ſtamping. "I ſhall manage the boy however," ſaid he: "for many is the piece of hard iron I have ſoftened." So he went to meet Siegfried, and bade him welcome. Siegfried however looked at him ſternly, and his anger darted like lightning from his eyes, ſo that Mimer was fain to look on one ſide, while the hero thus anſwered his greeting. "None of you, ye faithleſs ones, ſhall be welcome to me! I have burned the coals and I have paid his recompenſe to the companion you ſent me, and now thou ſhalt receive thine; for Siegfried the Swift, the ſon of King Siegmund, is not accuſtomed to be in anybody's debt."

Mimer was not frightened at this ſpeech, but ſaid, "Now I plainly perceive that thou art not ſo valiant as I thought thee, and as thy fathers were. So much anger about a young reptile, which thy anceſtors would have trodden in the duſt or ſtrangled without a word! I thought the creature would give thee a little paſtime, for hadſt thou only aſked it, he would have helped thee in thy taſk. With the fire which ſpouted like a fountain from his jaws I have burned many coals, and roaſted many a head of game, whilſt thou, who thinkeſt thyſelf ſo wondrous bold, art afraid of it, and canſt do nothing with the poor thing but kill it. I verily believe thou haſt poked out its

eyes when aſleep, that thou mighteſt cut off its head without danger, like a lamb bound for the ſlaughter."

At theſe words Siegfried was ſtill more wrath, and ſaid, laughing diſdainfully, "Only ſtoop, thou old reptile, and my ſword ſhall ſmite through thy bald head and ſend thee to thy companion the dragon, that ye may amuſe yourſelves together, and roaſt and burn coals as long as you pleaſe." So ſaying he graſped his ſword. Mimer ſtepped back and ſaid, ſtretching out his right hand, "Stay! and only hear me; I will offer thee amends that ſhall ten times outweigh thy anger. Gold and ſilver thou ſhalt gain as none has ever done before, of all who ever wielded a ſword or mounted a horſe. Seeſt thou yonder, between two oaks, the blue mountain with the rocky peaks?—there lives my eldeſt brother. He watches in his cave over countleſs treaſures, ſuch as no king poſſeſſes; to obtain them he murdered our father. Now he is accurſed, and crawls about in the form of a dragon. I will conduct thee to him, and will provide thee with good and truſty weapons. When we have killed him we will ſhare his treaſures. Wait till I fetch thee the arms."

So ſaying, he went ſtraight into the cave, and brought a helmet, ſhield and armour, the moſt beautiful Siegfried had ever ſeen. Theſe he gave the hero, who was however ſilent and expreſſed not a word of pleaſure. At laſt the ſmith gave him the ſword, ſaying, "Look-ye, this is the beſt of all ſwords; I made it for Hartuit the King in Holmgart,—take it in both

hands and ſtab my brother the Dragon to the heart; his treaſures will then be ours."

Then Siegfried took the ſword in both his hands, raiſed it on high, and ſaid, "Now I will try the ſharpneſs of this ſword, whether it be as good as thou haſt ſaid; and thy faithleſs heart, thou murderer of thy brother, ſhall feel it firſt." Ere the laſt word was off his tongue, Mimer the falſe ſmith lay dead at his feet.

TENTH ADVENTURE.

Siegfried ſees the great Dragon, and meets a King of the Dwarfs.

SIEGFRIED now thought of purſuing his journey; but he firſt tore down the walls, and deſtroyed the entire cave, where only weapons for fraud, treachery and wickedneſs were forged. He left not one ſtone upon another, ſo that at the preſent day no one can ſay where ſtood the ſmithy of the Giants, where Siegfried the Swift learned the art of a ſmith.

With joyous courage he advanced through the dark woods and the green and ſunny meadows; quickly he leaped over the roaring ſtreams of the foreſt, and nothing could ſtop his courſe. But the country became daily more awful and terrific; more

ſteep and lofty were the jagged rocks, more rapidly and fiercely fell the ſtreams, the graſs and weeds in the meadows were ſo high that they roſe far above the heads of his dogs, and beaſts of prey ran about in troops. The undaunted hero proceeded onwards, till one day he heard his dogs howl mournfully. He haſtened up, ſuppoſing that ſome venomous ſerpent or beaſt of prey had ſeized them. But nothing of the kind was to be ſeen; his dogs were ſtanding in a meadow, the damp graſs of which was reeking with the heat of the ſun. On approaching near, he ſaw that they were howling at ſome foot-tracks which they had diſcovered, the like of which he had never ſeen. They ſhowed two large paws with long claws; and as he was inſpecting them, the ſun ſuddenly became darkened, and his dogs crept timidly up to him. He was ſurpriſed at this, for there was not a cloud in the ſky. For the firſt time in his life he felt alarmed, when he ſaw a wild Dragon flying over him in the air. It was black as night, but at every breath it drew, a pointed flame of fire iſſued from its jaws; its head and neck were of horn, and the internal fire ſhone through both, with a dark red colour, and lighted its blue wings. It flew ſlowly and ſteadily, making vaſt circles with its long tail.

Siegfried now perceived to what creature the foot-tracks belonged; he ſtood under a tree and watched the flight of the monſter for a long time, and thought to himſelf, "May the leader of battles aſſiſt me now! Yon creature is the fiend himſelf in a living form, for of all the Dragons depicted on my

father's walls, not one is equal to this. Grant but the victory to my good ſword, that I may fight a good fight againſt this ſon of darkneſs!" Meanwhile the Dragon flew quietly on and diſappeared behind a mountain.

Siegfried now heard on a ſudden the jingling of bells and the tramp of a horſe. He turned round, and before him on the meadow was a tall jet-black horſe, on which was ſeated a very little rider. Siegfried at firſt thought it muſt be a child of three years old, and wondered that any mother could be ſo careleſs as to let the poor infant ride about in the foreſt on a high horſe, ſo near the mighty Dragon. But when he ſaw the little rider nearer, he was aſtoniſhed to perceive that he had a beard whiter than ſnow, which reached to his girdle. His limbs and whole frame moreover were not formed like thoſe of a child, but were in good proportion like thoſe of a grown-up man. He had a venerable appearance with his long beard, and looked kindly and ſhrewdly from his little bright eyes.

Both horſe and rider were ſo beautifully and richly adorned that Siegfried had never ſeen the like in his father's caſtle of Konigſburg. The horſe's trappings were adorned in front with gold and behind with ſilver, the gold inlaid with white precious ſtones, the ſilver with red; while bells of gold and ſilver hung on the mane, fifty on each ſide, giving a pleaſing ſound. Thrown over the horſe hung a cloth of velvet, green as the graſs of the meadow in ſpring, on which was figured the whole earth;

round it ran a ſky-blue border, repreſenting the great ocean of the world, in which ſwam fiſh of gold and ſilver and purple. On the green velvet were embroidered flowers of all kinds, animals and men, with pearls and diamonds, all ſo ſmall and ſo highly adorned that a day would not ſuffice to examine them. The rider wore a ſilver helmet, on the top of which ſhone a carbuncle bright as the morning-ſtar, while the caſque itſelf was encircled by a crown of gold. His armour was of white ſteel; over it was ſpread a broad, royal mantle, faſtened at the waiſt by a girdle of diamonds, in the form of a ſnake. At his ſide hung a ſmall ſword, with a handle of rubies. Above all glanced his ſhield, appearing as if formed of diamonds. In the middle ſhone the ſun, and around it the ſeven ſtars; whilſt between theſe ran circles of all the colours of the rainbow. The ſhield had this power, that when the bearer held it before him he could ſee everything through it without being ſeen himſelf. Siegfried ſtood mute, and knew not what this ſtrange appearance meant.

"Hail to thee, valiant hero!" began the little ſtranger, "come hither under the trees; thou needſt not fear me, I have no ill deſign againſt thee; on the contrary, I come to offer thee fidelity and ſervice, and my aid in every danger."

"Why," ſaid the hero ſmiling, "I had no fear of thee, little man! For thy proffered friendſhip however I thank thee, although thy help may avail but little in danger; thou couldſt ſcarcely be ſeen in the high graſs, and when ſtanding

by my ſide a ſtork might ſnap thee up, with ſword and ſhield, taking thee for a little frog."

At theſe words the little rider was ſomewhat diſpleaſed, and ſaid, "Thou art thyſelf leſs than the giants, and yet thou thinkeſt to gain the victory over them! True, I am ſmall of ſtature,—yet I know much more than thou doſt, for Siegfried the ſon of King Siegmund knows not my name, nor does he perhaps know my power. From gratitude I am come to lead thee out of the wood, becauſe thou haſt ſlain the Dragon who held me and my people in ſlavery. For know I am named Euglein, and I am a rich and potent King of the Dwarfs of theſe mountains."

"Well then, King Euglein," anſwered Siegfried, "ſhow me where I can gain honour, and my ſword ſhall ever be devoted in gratitude to thee."

"'Tis well," anſwered the other; "and had I not come hither thy life would have been loſt, for the Dragon who lives hereabouts is the moſt fearful of all creatures, and he it is who holds captive the beautiful King's daughter of the Rhine. He took her from her father's caſtle, and now ſhe ſits weeping and wringing her hands on the Drachenſtein. No one but myſelf knows the way to the ſpot, and ſhe will never be releaſed unleſs Heaven takes pity on the poor maiden. But let us haſte, or we are loſt!"

Siegfried was delighted at hearing theſe words; he ſprang from amid the trees, ſmote three times with his ſword on a

ſtone, which he cut aſunder like a ſponge, and then exclaimed, "May the ſword of my enemies thus pierce my body if I depart hence till I have fought with the Dragon for the maiden!"

"If that be the caſe, give me leave," ſaid the Dwarf in alarm, "to quit the wood and fly hence: for hadſt thou traverſed the whole earth from eaſt to weſt, and overcome all ſtrong men and all monſters, ſtill muſt thou leave the maiden to the Dragon on the rock."

"Nay, not ſo, little man; thou muſt ſhow me thy fidelity and give me thy aſſiſtance, and help me to win her."

"That cannot be," replied the Dwarf; "if thou wilt ruſh upon thy death, thou muſt do ſo alone; I will no longer keep thee company. But if thou wilt follow me, I will give thee gold and pearls and coſtly jewels, magic weapons and roots of healing powers, and will teach thee likewiſe many a maxim of ancient wiſdom; but never will I guide thee to the Drachenſtein."

So ſaying, the little man gave his horſe the golden ſpur, but Siegfried ſeized the bridle, and thus in anger ſpoke the hero: "Thou muſt ſhow me the way, or thou rideſt not home with thy head upon thy ſhoulders!" Then he ſeized the Dwarf by the beard; but the little man ſtrove and ſtruggled with ſuch force that Siegfried could not ſufficiently admire his prodigious ſtrength. A magic ring gave the Dwarf this ſupernatural power. The ſweat ſtood upon Siegfried's forehead in great

drops, but ſtill he was unable to maſter his tiny opponent, and the conteſt laſted till in the ſtruggle the ring fell from the Dwarf's finger. Then Siegfried ſeized the mannikin by his right foot, threw him from the ſaddle, and held him head downwards againſt a ſtone, ſaying, "On this ſtone I will daſh out thy obſtinate brains if thou lead me not to the Dragon." But the Dwarf cried out piteouſly and ſaid, "Calm thy anger, thou proud hero! I will adviſe thee as well as I am able, if thou wilt only ſpare my life." With this Siegfried was ſatisfied, and ſet the Dwarf upon his legs again.

ELEVENTH ADVENTURE.

Siegfried's fight with the faithleſs Giants under the Drachenſtein.

WHEN the poor Dwarf had recovered his breath, he tied his horſe with fear and trembling to the trunk of a tree, and then ran on before Siegfried to the Drachenſtein. He paſſed over wild ravines, behind waterfalls, and through the hollows of rocks, till at length he came to the entrance of a cave. It looked much like Mimer's ſmithy, only that it was wilder and more appalling. "Here," ſaid he, "dwells Kuperan, a King of the Giants; when he takes his ſtand upon the rocks and blows his horn a thouſand Giants are ready at his command, and all the Dwarfs in the

mountains around, and all the ſpirits of the woods and waters are ſubject to him, for he is of all giants the ſtrongeſt and fierceſt. He with his companions can overturn mountains and pour ſtreams over the land as he pleaſes; he can ſink ſhips and root up foreſts. He has formed an alliance with the fierce Dragon, and keeps the key which locks up the hollow cave. Heareſt thou the roaring in thoſe rocky hills, as if a mountain torrent were ruſhing through?—that is his ſnoring. It is high time that we depart, for if he awakes there will be rough ſport."

"Nay, it is for that ſport," ſaid Siegfried, "that I have come hither." And thereupon he went to the entrance and blew the horn which hung before it, ſo loud that the rocks far and near re-echoed to the ſound. The Dwarf leaped in affright into a hollow tree. But the Giant ſlept on. Then Siegfried blew the horn a ſecond time, with ſuch force that all the birds in the wood were ſilent and flew to their neſts. But the Giant never opened his eyes; he muttered only, "How loud thoſe plaguy waſps are humming to-day." Siegfried now turned his ſpear and ſtruck the ſavage ſleeper in the ſide. Without opening his eyes, the Giant ſtruck at the ſpear, thinking a waſp had ſtung him. The iron bent in Siegfried's hand, but the monſter continued his ſlumber. Then the hero knelt at his head and ſhouted with a loud voice, "Wake up, wake up, thou prince of giants! a young wolf is in thy neſt." The monſter now turned himſelf round and looked at the hero in

ſcorn. Grim was his aſpect, and his face was covered with red hair: his limbs were huge and clumſy, his eyes round, his mouth reached almoſt from ear to ear, and gaped like a mountain cave: two large boar's tuſks ſtuck out, and reached up to his ill-formed noſe. From his frightful appearance he bore the name of Wolfgrambear, for he was as hungry as a wolf and as ſavage as a bear.

"What has brought thee here, boy?" he ſaid, grinding his teeth; "I know not whether I ought to hang thee up here in my hall by thy head or thy heels, my little fellow."

"Heaven forbid thou ſhouldſt do either, thou hungry vulture!" ſaid Siegfried; "I am ſurely not come here to be hung; the ſword is my friend, fighting my paſtime, and danger my delight. So releaſe the maiden whom thou and the Dragon are keeping in captivity, or elſe thou ſhalt ſink into the earth, and the oak-trees ſhall grow over thy body."

At theſe words the Giant was in great wrath; he ſnatched up a rock and hurled it at the hero; but Siegfried the Swift leaped aſide with a ſmile, and avoided it. Raging with anger, the Giant now raiſed his mighty iron poleaxe to cleave him from head to foot: but Siegfried avoided the blow, and the weapon ſplit the rock at his feet and ſank deep in the earth out of the Giant's hand. As he ſtooped to draw it out, Siegfried ſprang on him and gave him many ſevere cuts in his arm, while the dogs flew at him and faſtened on his legs. The Giant ſeized the dogs one after another, and threw them far

away into the valley; then he ſeized the poleaxe anew, but the blood flowed in copious ſtreams from many a deep wound, ſo that he became exhauſted and fled into the middle of his cave. Here he dreſſed his wounds, and put on a coat-of-mail which the Dwarfs had made for him and hardened in dragon's blood. To his ſide he faſtened a ſword, broad and long, at the point of which ran a ſnake, and wherever it flew hiſſing, death entered and life departed. On his head he put a helmet of black ſteel in the form of a dragon; the ſhield which he hung around him was inlaid with iron, and ſo huge that he could lift upon it a knight and his horſe.

Thus armed he came out with a four-edged poleaxe, which at every ſtroke rang like a bell. Then he cried aloud to Siegfried, "Tell me, thou little man, what have I done to thee, that thou comeſt here to murder me in my ſleep?"

"Thou lieſt, ſavage monſter! have I not myſelf aroused thee to the fight, when I could have plunged my ſword in thy heart?"

The Giant replied, "He who led thee hither has led thee to thy death, and that thou ſhalt find before the ſun goes down behind the hills; and were there ten ſuch as thou art, I would put you each on a ſhirt you ſhould never get off again."

"Come on then!" cried Siegfried, "but take care of thyſelf, for many a one has boaſted of doing great things when the ravens were already ſitting on his helmet ready to peck at his eyes."

The two now ruſhed at each other, and dealt ſuch weighty blows that the fire flew from their ſhields, and the eagle high above the rocks and the wolf in the cave below let go their prey and fled. The Giant however conſtantly miſſed his aim, for he was naturally clumſy and unwieldy, and his wounds had crippled him; but Siegfried ſtruck blow after blow as rapidly as if he had had ten ſwords in his hand, and hewed pieces out of the large iron ſhield like a carpenter at his work. Kuperan at length had only the ſtrap left in his hand; covered with blood, he began to reel like ſome mighty oak, till at length he piteouſly exclaimed, "Hold, hold, thy ſword! ſhort as it is, it ſtrikes deep; I have proved thy courage, and ſee that I cannot gain the victory over thee. Grant me but my life, brave hero,—my weapons and myſelf thou mayſt take as thine own."

"Then," ſaid Siegfried, "the firſt thing I require of thee is to free the maiden on the rock."

"Thus ended the ſtrife, and both ſwore fidelity to each other in all their dangers—the Giant that he would ſerve the hero faithfully, and Siegfried that he would take no revenge for the conflict.

But the Giant was deceitful, and all the while conſidered only how he could accompliſh Siegfried's deſtruction. Siegfried, on the contrary, ſpoke to him frankly and kindly. "Thy wounds, my poor fellow, grieve me much,—I will dreſs them before we aſcend the rock." So ſaying, he tore his own gar-

ments and bound them round the wounds of the treacherous Giant, and they went on their way together. Eugelein, the dwarf-king, crept from his hollow tree and ran behind them, but without being ſeen, for he wore his cap of miſt which rendered him inviſible. Siegfried went before, followed by Kuperan the faithleſs.

The way led into a narrow rocky valley. On the further ſide ſtood, upon dry ſtony ground, dwarf oaks and buſhes; beyond roſe ſteep and naked rocks, half covered with trees and hollowed by falling waters. On the right deſcended ſteeply a ſmooth precipice of ſtone, and in the depth of the valley itſelf, foaming over rocks, ruſhed a wild ſtream. A bow-ſhot further on, the valley was cloſed by another ſteep precipice a hundred fathoms deep, over which the ſtream ruſhed into the depth below daſhing againſt the rocks and maſſes of ſtone.

The Giant raiſed his hand, and pointing to a crevice in the rock above, ſaid, "Seeſt thou the cave yonder behind the waterfall—there we muſt enter." While Siegfried was looking about, the falſe monſter raiſed his hand and gave King Siegmund's ſon ſuch a blow on his helmet, that he fell ſenſeleſs on his ſhield and lay ſtretched on the ground like one dead. Then the Giant ſtooped to throw him over the precipice into the foaming waters beneath; but the hero's dogs flew fiercely at him, and Eugelein the nimble dwarf ſprang forwards, put on his cap of miſt and bore Siegfried away in ſafety under the trees.

The Giant was much ſurpriſed when he found that his

enemy had diſappeared. He looked round on all ſides, fancying that he muſt have fallen over the rocks from the force of the blow, and he was about to ſend the hounds after him. But they, accuſtomed to fight with wild-beaſts, drew back quickly when he ſtooped to ſeize them, and as he ſlowly roſe they ſprang barking between his legs. The Giant ſtooped again, ſeized one of them by the throat, and was going to throw him over the rock, when the other dog ſprang upon his back and ſeized him by the right ear, ſo that Wolfgrambear bellowed till the valleys echoed around. Again the Giant tried to ſeize the dog; but by this time he had come to the place where Siegfried lay with his cap of miſt, and thus inſtead of the dog he caught hold of the Dwarf's head, who immediately began to cry out piteouſly. Siegfried awoke from his ſwoon, ſprang up, threw away the cap of miſt and gave the Giant ſuch a wound in the neck with his ſharp ſword, that he inſtantly let go the Dwarf. Then he raiſed his ſword again to give the faithleſs Giant his death-blow, when the latter held out in his right hand a golden key, and ſaid, "Hold! or I will throw away this key, and then you will never reach the King's daughter on the Drachenſtein, for in the whole world there is no key but this that will open the enchanted caſtle." Siegfried let fall his ſword, and gave the treacherous monſter his life a ſecond time.

TWELFTH ADVENTURE.

Of the great Wonders which Siegfried ſaw in the Dragon's Rock.

SIEGFRIED, being aware of the treachery of the Giant, now made him go on before, and ſo they arrived at the cave, which was concealed behind the water that fell from on high. Here they were firſt obliged to creep down eight fathoms; then the Giant ſcraped away the earth and leaves from the ground and a large iron lock was viſible; this he unfaſtened, and lifting up a heavy iron plate, under which ran a ſtone ſtaircaſe, Kuperan bade Siegfried go before. But the hero looked angrily at him and ſaid, "Thinkeſt thou I have ſo ſoon forgotten thy treachery, that thou openeſt a new trap for me?" Then he took the large key from the lock and puſhed the Giant on with it, and made him run quickly down the ſteps, Siegfried and the Dwarf following after.

They paſſed through long paſſages which led right and left into the interior of the mountain, in which a perſon ignorant of the place would ſoon be loſt, for one might wander there days and days without finding an outlet. The Giant would doubtleſs have led the hero through byeways into ſome abyſs where he would have fallen headlong, and either have daſhed out his

brains againſt the rocks or periſhed of hunger and thirſt among poiſonous ſnakes, but the Giant was afraid of the Dwarf, who was well acquainted with the mountain.

Upon the walls Siegfried ſaw the blackened ſkeletons of various animals of frightful forms and prodigious ſize. The Dwarf told him theſe were the dragons who for centuries had lived here in alliance with the giants. Some of them ſtill held in their claws the ſkeletons of thoſe creatures that had fallen their victims; others ſtill ſtretched out their jaws as if to vomit fire and poiſon. Going further, they came to a hall which was ſo lofty that the higheſt oak would not have reached the roof. In the middle of the apartment burned a dark red fire, and around it ſtood a circle of altars of ſtone ſtained with blood. "This is the great burial-place of the giants," ſaid Eugelein; and Siegfried ſaw their corpſes lying in two rows on ſtone ſhields, with ſtone clubs. On the altars near the fire the priſoners whom they took were ſlain as death-offerings, and their blood was drunk at the funeral feaſt.

They now paſſed through many paſſages, till they came to a hall which ſhone ſo bright that Siegfried was obliged to hold his ſhield before his eyes to prevent being dazzled. The hall looked like a vaſt arbour; the walls were compoſed of ſhining trees, which twined their leaves and branches cloſe together. Fruits of ſilver and gold ſhone amid the dark green foliage, and creeping plants of all kinds wound around the ſtems. Theſe however were none of the plants which grew on the ſoil of the

earth above, but only rare and precious metals that lie hid in the interior of the earth. The moſt beautiful objects of all were the flowers, which bloomed around in a thouſand varied colours. They were the precious ſtones that lie concealed in the mines. Elves and Dwarfs, and tiny men of elegant ſhape and aſpect, tripped nimbly to and fro, to tend the flowers, to water the trees, and to pluck the fruits: they wore garments white as the daylight, and zealouſly performed their duty without looking up.

From this hall Siegfried entered a ſecond, conſtructed of pure cryſtal. In the midſt ſtood tranſparent pillars in two rows, and brilliant ſtreams of water poured from them, forming arches of varied colours. The foot of the columns was adorned with coſtly ſhells, from which ſprung up water-plants, encircling the columns with their flowers. Little water-ſprites peeped out from the foliage, and held flowers in their mouths, from which they playfully ſpouted water. Beneath, in the green graſs, ſat ſea-nymphs, combing their long wet hair: others were playing on harps, while their ſiſters danced in graceful movements around the pillars. So ſtrange, yet ſo ſweet, were the tunes to the ſongs, that whoever heard them once could never forget them.

The third hall, which ſucceeded this, was of blue tranſparent jaſper. On the ceiling beamed ſtars of gold, and the ſun and moon ſat on ſhining horſes of light and played at ball with the morning and evening ſtars. High above was perched a

mighty eagle; when he expanded and flapped his wings, the breeze floated now louder, now more gently through the hall, and the birds began to ſing around.

The Giant now complained that he muſt reſt, on account of his wounds; ſo they ſeated themſelves, and while Siegfried looked around in aſtoniſhment, Eugelein, the dwarf-king, ſaid, "It may well ſurpriſe thee how a Dragon can have ſo many ſplendid apartments, ſince his abode is the darkness of night; but thou wilt ſee another chamber ſtill which outſhines this as the noon excels the morning. The halls repreſent the elements, and for many a century thouſands of induſtrious Dwarfs have laboured here, and the hammer has never been out of their hands. But all this now belongs to the Dragon whom we are compelled to ſerve; and if thou canſt not overcome him, he will kill us all with his poiſonous breath, and the maiden will be irrecoverably loſt.

"Yet it was not always ſo, as my forefathers have told me. There was a time when bleſſed ſpirits lived on earth in joy and unity, in dwellings of heavenly light. No ſword or pointed dagger was then made, nor did the ſweat of ſlavery run from man's brow. Vaſes for offerings alone came from our forges, from which pure incenſe roſe up to heaven. Life was a pleaſure and labour ſport; and on bright and ſhining ſeats ſat the Aſi, the fathers of mankind, and read from iron tablets the ſacred maxims of eternal wiſdom and the laws of the inſcrutable Deity, whoſe name none ventures to utter.

" But from the boſom of Night roſe Loki, the prince of darkneſs. In a form of beauty, with ſmiling countenance and ſeductive ſpeech, the arch deceiver appeared before the patriarch of our race, who believed his ſmooth words. They pledged a brotherly love to each other, and in token of amity they mingled their blood. This was the beginning of all evils. The deceived one knew not that the old Dragon, the enemy of gods and men, the father of darkness, had infuſed into him his own poiſonous breath. And there alſo aroſe from the boſom of the ſame Night, where the fiery Dragons dwell with ſavage Giants, an evil enchantreſs, who was verſed in all black arts. In pleaſing form ſhe appeared before our fathers, and on her forehead ſhone a rich ornament of gold, which ſhe had formed by magic power from ſtolen rays of heavenly light. And as the Fathers looked in her glowing eyes, and the dazzling brilliancy of the falſe gold enchained their looks, the cunning deceiver whiſpered to them, and avarice, envy, and diſcord aroſe in their hearts. Then all oaths and vows of fidelity were forgotten, and the firſt battle was fought on earth. Ever ſince a fearful curſe has reſted on alluring magic gold, which was the cauſe of the evil.

" The Aſi, when they came to their ſenſes, would fain have deſtroyed in the fire the enchantreſs with her treacherous wealth ; but thrice ſhe roſe from the flames uninjured, and laughed them to ſcorn. When after being pierced with the ſpear, ſhe was again thrown into the flames, the crafty deceiver approached the fire, took her half-conſumed heart from her boſom, and

ſwallowed it. With the heart he became poſſeſſed of all her magic arts and power; but he had alſo imbibed all her wickedneſs, her evil deſires and ſavage luſt; thus the flames of vice ever burned more darkly and fiercely in his boſom, and he conſidered only how he might deſtroy both heaven and earth in one vaſt conflagration. But the hypocrite would not caſt off his dazzling appearance, for he was bent on more ſurely effecting the deſtruction of all.

"He now married a Gianteſs, a baſe witch, the daughter of primeval Night, who continually brooded over and foretold miſchief; and ſhe produced three monſters, from whom all other monſters have come upon the earth. Her firſt child was the great ſerpent of the world, who, concealed at the bottom of the ſea, winds his folds around the earth, holds his tail in his mouth, and ſwallows all that approaches him. If the water becomes too dry and ſhallow, he turns in raging anger and the earth trembles at his convulſions. The ſecond monſter was the great wolf of the abyſs, who is equalled by no other in ſavage cruelty and ſtrength. From his noſtrils he ſnorts forth flames, his eyes ſcatter fire, and he threatens to ſwallow up both ſun and moon with his dark and voracious jaws. The third child of this pair was the princeſs of the lower world and of death. Shuddering awe dwells in her looks, and her empire is the dark valleys where the ſun never ſmiles and clouds and miſts form eternal night. Theſe three children Loki cauſed to be brought up among the Giants in the land of Night, where they

grew to enormous ſize and ſtrength. But he himſelf kept up ntercourſe in various forms with our forefathers, and ſowed oiſon and deſtruction everywhere around.

Loki once went forth with Odin and Haener to wander over the earth. They came to a piece of water named the waterfall of Andvari: in the ſtream ſat an otter, catching fiſh and devouring hem eagerly. It was not however a real otter, but the ſon of a powerful enchanter, and the brother of Mimer the baſe ſmith and of Fafner the Dragon, who dwells here on the rock. Catching fiſh and hunting were his only pleaſure, and he changed himſelf daily into an otter and caught fiſh in the ſtream, which he took home, where he ſat in a corner and ate them. He had juſt ſnapped up a fiſh, when the treacherous Loki, who well knew that he was a man, caught up a ſtone and killed him. Loki's companions were delighted with their prey, and ſtripped off the ſkin of the otter. But it ſo happened that in the evening they entered the dwelling of his father, the old enchanter Reidmar, who, by the ſkin and by their blood-ſtained hands, perceived at once that they had ſlain his ſon. With the help of his ſons he took away their weapons, made them priſoners, and threatened to be revenged on them, unleſs by way of atonement they filled the ſkin of the otter and covered the outſide of it with gold, ſo that not a hair could be ſeen.

" Odin and Haener were compelled to remain with him, for they ſent Loki forth to get the gold, becauſe he was the moſt cunning. So he went again to the waterfall and there

made priſoner a Dwarf, who kept concealed in his cave the richeſt treaſure known to mankind. Beſide an infinite quantity of gold and diamonds, there was alſo a miraculous helmet, the ſight of which makes all living things tremble, a tarn-cap, which beſtows inviſibility and ſtrength upon the wearer, and the ſword Balmung, againſt which no ſhield is proof. The moſt precious object however was a gold ring of wondrous power; whoever poſſeſſed it was ſure never to want gold, for it always increaſed according to his wiſh. The ring however was made of falſe gold, which the enchantreſs had brought from the boſom of Night for the purpoſe of deception, and it was the cauſe that oaths were firſt broken and blood was ſhed in the firſt battle. On it alſo reſted the primeval curſe, for it brought evil on whoever poſſeſſed it.

" Loki compelled the captive Dwarf to bring the whole of the treaſure from his cave; but the magic ring he concealed under his arm; however Loki ſaw the glitter of the gold, and inſiſted on having the ring likewiſe; the Dwarf begged piteouſly that he would leave him this one of all his treaſures; but Loki was inexorable. Then the Dwarf went into his cave and uttered a fearful curſe on the treaſure, that it might bring no good fortune to any one, and on the ring, that it might cauſe the death of any one who poſſeſſed it.

" Loki now returned to Reidmar, and they filled the otter's ſkin with the gold, placed the animal on its feet, and covered it with gold. Reidmar examined the ſkin, and perceiving a ſingle

hair, required that this alſo ſhould be covered with gold. Odin took the ring of diſcord from his finger, and while he was covering the hair with it, Loki repeated the curſe of the Dwarf. Reidmar now allowed them to go their way, and from that time the treaſure has been called the treaſure of the Nibelungen, for Reidmar's family was a race of Night, and they were called the Nibelungen.

" It was not long before the ſplendour of the gold ring caught the eye of Fafner, and he longed to poſſeſs it, for he was the ſtrongeſt and fierceſt of the brothers, and wiſhed to call his own all that was there. He excited his brother Mimer, and they both went to their father and required their ſhare of the recompenſe. Reidmar however refuſed to give up the gold, and concealed it under his couch, that his ſons might not ſteal it, and night and day this treaſure was his anxiety and care.

" But the ring was never out of Fafner's mind. In an evil hour he ſtole to his father's bed, drew the ſword Balmung, and plunged it into the heart of his parent as he ſlept. When Reidmar the old magician ſaw how his unfaithful ſon ſeized upon the gold, he repeated with his dying breath the horrible curſe which he had learned from Loki, and conjured his daughters to avenge his murder. The curſe of a dying father had its effect, and Fafner was immediately changed into a fierce and fiery Dragon. The flames of burning luſt and the poiſon of conſuming envy darted from his jaws, and nothing ſince has power to aſſuage his

thirſt of evil, for he is ever impelled to ſome new deed of plunder and murder.

" Mimer, his brother, required from him ſome portion of his inheritance of blood; and when Fafner angrily refuſed him, he vowed his death; and for this reaſon he hath ſent thee to him, and longs to drink his blood and eat his heart, for he alſo thirſts after this accurſed gold. Loki the crafty deceiver, who prepared this miſchief, did not eſcape the fearful puniſhment of his wickedneſs. He committed many a ruthleſs act, and became more and more cruel and daring, till at laſt he perpetrated the moſt frightful deed that the human heart ever conceived. Odin, the father of the Aſi, had a ſon, whoſe countenance ſhone like the ſun, and whoſe mild and gentle looks delighted every one; wiſe was his diſcourſe, and all his ſayings came to paſs. Before the light which beamed from his countenance, impurity vaniſhed and ſin fled away. Hence he was named Balder the Good, and was loved and praiſed by all. Now Loki the evil one hated no one ſo much as Balder the Good, and would rather have loſt his own life than that he ſhould continue to live.

" Evil dreams and forebodings troubled the good Balder. Fearing ſome dread misfortune, the Aſi ſent to Frigga, requeſting that ſhe would exact an oath from all and everything on earth—trees and animals, ſtones and diſeaſes, poiſons and ſnakes—that they would not injure Balder the Good, whom all ſo loved. All promiſed the goddeſs; and the Aſi, highly de-

lighted, placed the illuſtrious youth in the midſt of them, and in ſport threw ſharp ſpears and pointed ſtones at him. Nothing injured him, for he was ſacred to all things. Loki ſtood by and watched the ſport with envious eyes: then he aſſumed the form of a woman, went to Frigga and told her with feigned delight of the ſport of the Aſi, and cunningly aſked her if all had pledged her their oath, and if none was forgotten. Frigga ſaid, 'Eaſtward from Walhalla grows a miſſelto,—I paſſed it by, for it ſeemed to me too tender to do any harm.' When Loki heard theſe words, he immediately went and cut a ſlip from the plant for a dart. Then he returned to the ſport, and went up to Hoedur, who ſtood by and took no part in the paſtime, becauſe he was blind. Loki gave the dart into his hand and deſired him to throw it in honour of the beloved Balder, and that he himſelf would guide his arm. Hoedur threw the dart, and Balder fell pierced and dead on the ground. The Aſi were ſtruck dumb with terror and grief, and each looked ſpeechleſs at the other, for they ſaw in Balder's death a preſage of their own deſtruction and that of the whole viſible world; ſince the curſe had come upon it through the evil one whom they had received among them, and with whom they had mingled their blood. But Odin forbade them to take revenge, becauſe the ſpot was dedicated to peace.

"With great lamentation they buried the corpſe by the ſeaſide, and all the families of mankind, even the Giants from the icebergs, came to the interment. Nanna, the wife of Balder,

died of a broken heart, and was buried by his ſide. Laſtly Odin approached the corſe and whiſpered in its ear: no one knows the words of the farewell he uttered, but ſome ſay he ſpoke of a happy meeting again.

" Thereupon the Aſi ſent Hermodur, the brother of Balder, down to the pale Goddeſs of the Dead, to entreat her to reſtore the murdered Balder to the upper world. Hermodur rode for nine nights through the deep valleys of the ſhades which lead to the kingdom of the Dead. Then he came to a ſtream, and rode over a bridge which ſhone with gold: it was guarded by a maiden, of a bold and confident aſpect, armed with ſword and ſhield. ' What wilt thou here?' ſhe cried. ' Five troops of corſes rode over yeſterday, and the bridge trembled not thus; thou haſt not the look of the dead.' When Hermodur ſpoke to her of Balder, ſhe bade him ride further toward Midnight. He came to a caſtle, leaped over the high gate, and ſtepped into the hall of the pale Princeſs of the Dead. Around her ſtood the maidens who accompany the dead in their journey to the tomb; behind her ſtood a red cock, and at her feet lay Pain, Wearineſs and Exhauſtion. There he ſaw Balder and his wife ſitting on high. But the princeſs replied to his requeſt, ' Now I can prove whether it be true, as report declares, that Balder is ſo beloved by all. His return to the light ſhall be permitted if all things alive and dead lament his death.' Balder gave his brother a miraculous ring for Odin, by way of remembrance; then they parted, and Hermodur returned.

" The Aſi immediately ſent out their meſſengers into the wide world to beg all creatures to releaſe Balder with their tears. All Nature—the birds of the foreſt, the flowers of the meadow and the beaſts of the field—lamented the murdered one, who had been their joy and delight. As the meſſengers were returning home with joy, they found a hideous Gianteſs ſitting in a cave, who exclaimed, ' No tears will I ſhed for one whoſe life or death troubles me not: the pale Princeſs of the Shades may keep him!' The meſſengers at once perceived that this was no other than the baſe Loki, the old murderer and liar, who thus prevented the deliverance of Balder, and they returned home ſorrowful.

" Loki however, urged by the fear of puniſhment and haunted by the thoughts of his own wickedneſs, flew off to a mountain, where he built a houſe with four gates, facing the four winds. All night he watched; in the day he changed himſelf into a fiſh, and concealed himſelf in a waterfall. But fearing that they would catch him there, he made himſelf ſkilfully a little net, that he might practiſe how to eſcape from its meſhes. But the wicked Loki was caught in his own ſnare, for as he was weaving it the Aſi came. He quickly threw the net into the fire and leaped into the water; but the Aſi ſaw the enchanted net in the flames, and immediately made one exactly like it, as broad as the ſtream in which Loki had hidden himſelf. Then they ſtretched it out and went along the ſtream to catch the cunning ſerpent.

" Loki ſwam away from the net and concealed himſelf between two ſtones, ſo that the net paſſed over him. Still they could perceive that ſomething living had touched it: ſo they faſtened heavy balls to it, and the net then ſank ſo cloſe to the ground that Loki could not creep away from it. Then he ſwam to the mouth of the ſtream, and they ſaw him ſuddenly leap over it and turn back to the waterfall. So they returned back a third time, divided themſelves into two bands, and one of them, Thor the Strong, went through the middle of the ſtream. Loki was again driven towards the ſea; he was afraid to ſwim into it, and leaped into the air, when, ſwift as lightning, Thor caught him and held him by the tail.

" They bore him immediately to a dark and deep cavern, and then piled up three ſtones, through which they bored a hole. A ſon of Loki, changed into a wolf, was there, devouring his own brother, and with the entrails of this infernal offſpring they bound the father faſt to the ſtones, for no other tie could hold him. Then a Gianteſs, whoſe father he had murdered, approached and hung over him a poiſonous ſnake, which dropped its burning venom on his face. But the Aſi allowed Sigyn his wife to attend him in his torment. She holds a cup under the ſnake and catches the poiſon: but when ſhe goes out to empty the cup, as it becomes filled, and the poiſon drops like fire upon his brow, he writhes with anguiſh, ſo that the whole earth trembles. And thus he muſt ever lie, until that day when heaven and earth ſhall be deſtroyed; and till then the ſtruggle

will continue with his poiſonous brood, the giants, enchanters and dragons, which our anceſtors the Aſi commenced, and which you the Heroes now continue."

While King Euglein related this with a very ſerious and ſolemn air, the Giant had leaned his head on his hands and fallen faſt aſleep, and it was with the greateſt difficulty that Siegfried could awaken him. Then they went quickly on and came to the fourth hall, which, as Euglein ſaid, ſurpaſſed the others in miraculous ſplendour. Around the walls burnt fire; white flames and blue and red and green wound round in figures of varied kinds, flowers and birds and beaſts. Then ſuddenly a thouſand ſparks ſhot forth, and transformed themſelves in the air into ſhining ſtars, golden crowns, and wreaths of flowers. In the middle of the hall was a baſin with a golden rim, from the midſt of which grew an aſh-tree that reached to the ceiling; the ground in which it ſtood was clear cryſtal, ſo that all its roots could be ſeen as if it ſtood mirrored in a lake. Siegfried could not ſufficiently admire this tree, which the Dwarfs had ſo ſkilfully made. Green leaves and golden fruits adorned the wide-ſpread boughs and dropped their dews of honeyed ſweetneſs. Above, on the ſummit, ſat a royal eagle, with a bright and piercing glance, and ſpread out his broad wings; on his head ſtood a hawk. Below on the ground were ſtanding, on the four ſides, four ſtags, which ſtretched out their necks upwards and ate the leaves of the tree. Three roots ran from it into the cryſtal baſin. The middle root

went deep into the abyſs below. There lay an enormous Dragon enveloped in darkneſs, ſwelling with poiſon and gnawing inceſſantly at the root. Around him crawled a thouſand poiſonous ſerpents and hungry wolves, and a dark vapour aſcended from the pit. In the midſt of it was a ſeat, on which ſat a female, with a crown on her head, of pallid countenance and with a dark dreſs: behind her, on the back of the ſeat, ſtood a large flame-coloured cock, at whoſe feet grazed a raven-black horſe near a ruſhing ſtream. The ſecond root ran from the aſh towards the north; there maſſes of ice lay piled up on each other, and therein ſat great Giants around an enormous horn, from which iſſued a ſpring. Oppoſite to this root ran a third, which was ſurrounded with light, and from a ſpring near it came forth ſky-blue water; two white ſwans were ſwimming in the water, and three beaming maidens ſtood on the margin, and took up water in golden veſſels and ſprinkled the tree. Around the ſpring were placed twelve royal ſeats or thrones, upon which ſat princes and princeſſes with golden crowns. A ſquirrel ran nimbly up and down the trunk, from the eagle on the top to the ſerpent below.

Siegfried looked at all this with amazement, and aſked the Dwarf what was the meaning of the tree. "That," replied the wiſe King, "is the celebrated aſh-tree Ygdraſil, an image of the world. The leaves of the tree are the clouds, and the golden fruits are the ſtars of heaven. The eagle that floats above is the King of heaven, who with ſearching eye overlooks

the world. The ſtem is the earth, and thence a root goes down into the depths below, where ſits the princeſs of the lower world; near her grazes the horſe who brings to her the dead from life, and behind her ſits the red cock. When the cock begins to crow, the world is deſtroyed. The Dragon that vomits flames, and the ſerpents, are the ſubterranean fire and the fierce ſtorms which agitate earth and ſea, and the wild deſires and paſſions which diſturb the breaſt of man and undermine his life, and gnaw continually until the tree is deſtroyed. The beautiful fountain with the golden ſeats, near the ſecond root, to the right, is the ſouth portion of the world. The three maidens are the three Fates who ſpin the thread of life. The two ſwans of light are the ſun and moon, and around ſhine the princes of heaven with their crowns.

"The root on the left is the north portion of the earth; there ſtand the lofty icebergs, there riſes the ſea, and there lies the great horn from which, at the laſt day, when the ſix winters of the world have paſſed away, the ſummons to the laſt judgment will be ſounded. Its call will ſummon all, from the higheſt heaven above to the deepeſt abyſs below; the leaves of the tree will tremble with fear, and its boughs will ſhake, and the earth will be convulſed and the ſea will roar. Then all ties will be looſened and torn aſunder; the ſerpent of the world will riſe with giant fury out of the water; the wolf will ſpring howling from the abyſs, and open wide its jaws at heaven; the dwarfs will ſigh at the gates of rock; fires will rage around the tree

of the world; the ſun and moon will be ſwallowed up by the wolves of darkneſs, and the ſtars will fall from the ſky. The day will be turned into night, and Loki will appear with all his evil ſpirits from hell, and the heroes will contend with him in the laſt great conteſt of the world. The Deity, who firſt created all things and ſent light into the world, will conſume the corrupted earth with his purifying fire. When however the laſt battle has been fought, when the dying heroes ſhall have conquered the powers of darkneſs, and the flames have conſumed the world, then a new morning will dawn in the heavens. A new and more happy earth will ariſe, the ſeeds will grow up of themſelves, and ſparkling waterfalls will guſh forth over the ſmiling verdure of the meadows. Then the good will receive their reward, and will again become poſſeſſed of the brazen tablets of eternal wiſdom, which they loſt in the beginning of time. But the bad, the perjurers, murderers, and deceivers, will wade in ſtreams of poiſon on the ſtrand of corpſes in the hall of ſerpents, and the old Dragon with his brood will fall into the abyſs."

THIRTEENTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried firſt ſees the King's Daughter and is received by her.

THUS ſpeaking, they entered a lofty chamber by an iron door. Around, on the walls, hung in double rows helmets and ſhields; and between them, in wild diſorder, ſplendid garments embroidered with gold, drinking-horns ornamented with ſilver, and ſilken banners. But all looked deſolate and waſte, the garments were ſtained with blood, the helmets and ſhields were ruſted, over the drinking-horns large ſpiders had woven their nets, and the ſilken banners were yellow with ſmoke. By the general diſorder it might eaſily be ſeen that it was all the produce of pillage. But the moſt fearful objects that met the eye in this robber's den of the Dragon were black iron pillars which ran through the hall: around them were faſtened horns of the deer and the urochs, and on every point of theſe horns was ſtuck a naked ſkull. Siegfried, ſword in hand, glanced around the apartment, but neither the Dragon nor the maiden were to be ſeen. It now appeared as if his ear caught the ſounds of muſic not far from him; he went in the direction in which it came, and looked through a high vaulted gallery on

the diſtant landſcape ; at the end of this paſſage he ſaw a maiden ſeated on a rock with a harp in her hand. She looked down into the wooded valleys, and ſang and played, whilſt a falcon ſat upon her harp, as if liſtening to her. Siegfried ſtood ſtill with his companions and hearkened as ſhe ſang thus :—

My father ſat within his hall
And drank the red and cooling wine,
He drank from out a cup of gold
At Worms, upon the dark green Rhine.

My mother held the ſilken threads
Within her hand ſo lily white,
And worked upon the cloth of gold
The deeds of hero and of knight.

My brothers threw the dice in ſport,
For ſwords and arms enrich'd with gold,
The while I ſat within and ſang
The deeds of knight or hero bold.

But ſwift deſcending from above
A Dragon fierce was ſeen to glide ;
He twined his folds around my form
And ſaid, " Come hence and be my bride !"

My father dropped his cup of gold,
My mother wrang her hand ſo white,
My brothers drew their ſwords in vain,
The Dragon bore me from their ſight.

And long may I here ſit and ſing
My lay upon the Drachenſtein,
My ſong will never reach, dear friends,
To you upon the dark green Rhine.

And long may I lament in vain!
Yon valley lies ſo far, ſo deep,
I never can my woes explain,
O would I in the grave could ſleep!

The ſinger here ceaſed, interrupted by her tears, but ſhe quickly and more vigorouſly ſeized the ſtrings and renewed her ſong:—

Yet ſay, art thou a captive
For ever doomed to be?
What hinders thee to venture—
To venture to be free?

One effort ſtill may ſave thee,
Then why delay ſo long?
Are fear and fright ſuch fetters?
Is the dread of death ſo ſtrong?

Oh no, the father's ſpirit
Still liveth in the heart,
It ſhrinketh not from danger,
Nor dreads from life to part.

Oh then ſound my harp-ſtrings
And echo my lay,
Ye both ſhall attend
On my dangerous way.
For hence I would flee
And find myſelf free.

Then take me, ye breezes,
And raiſe me above,
And waft me away
To the region I love,
Where ſpring's ſoft bowers
Are filled with flowers.

Nor leave me to wander,
Uncertain my flight,
But grant me the bleſſing,
The bleſſing of light!
Hence, hence let me flee,
From Dragon's haunt free.

When ſhe had ended her ſong, ſhe turned to the abyſs; but at this moment Siegfried ſprang towards her and held her back. "Stay, thou noble daughter of a king!" he cried, "here ſtands Siegfried, the ſon of King Siegmund, who will die or plunge the Dragon into this abyſs. Ceaſe therefore from weeping; thy ſorrow ſhall be changed to joy, and the Dragon ſhall crouch in the duſt before thee, and ſhall atone for thy tears with his heart's blood."

" Thanks, valiant hero, for thy aid; but haſte away from hence! thou canſt not ſave me, but wilt only periſh here, and thus increaſe my grief."

" No," replied Siegfried, " here will I fight for thee; for otherwiſe ſhame would ſtrike me to the heart, which is ſharper than iron itſelf. When a child I made a vow never to turn my back upon fire or ſword."

" Thou knoweſt not what thy tongue utters," anſwered the maiden; " 'tis madneſs to contend with that horrid creature. Wilt thou place thyſelf on the very ſpot where the lightning ſtrikes? No ſword can pierce his ſcales, and ſteel itſelf melts before his flaming breath. Return, and bear to my parents and brothers my laſt farewell!"

" Nay, lady; unworthy were I to be called the ſon of King Siegmund, nor could I ever dare to look my noble anceſtors in the face and fight as they did the great battle of the world, were I to flee like a coward. Never has fear ſtained the honour of our race; and when once my ſword gleams in my hand, victory or death can alone return it to its ſcabbard!"

" Alas," interrupted the Dwarf, " thy ſword can little help thee! One ſword alone—Balmung, the ſword of the Nibelungen, with which Fafner ſlew his father—has the power of giving the Dragon his death-wound. For this reaſon he keeps it concealed, and if the maiden cannot reveal to us this ſecret, all conflict is vain." The King's daughter ſaid that ſhe had never heard of this ſword. " Then much I fear," ſaid the

Dwarf gloomily, " that our death is not far diſtant; for never wilt thou ſlay the Dragon with the ſword thou beareſt, and of this I will give thee a proof."

Thereupon he ſprang ſuddenly into the hall, and returned with a large and ancient ſhield, which he could only juſt drag after him. " As vainly may your ſword attempt to cut the dragon's ſkin that is ſtretched over this ſhield, as to wound the Dragon himſelf."

Then Siegfried ſwung his ſword above his head with both hands and dealt ſo powerful a blow that it reſounded through all the halls of the hollow mountain; but the ſhield remained uninjured, and the ſword broke off at the handle. At the ſight of this, all were loſt in amazement: the Dwarf wrung his hands, and the maiden entreated Siegfried to fly. But the hero was ſtill undaunted, he yielded not a ſtep, and ſaid, " To the brave man courage is more than a good ſword, and my courage at leaſt is yet unbroken; my arms are ſtill ſtrong, and with them I will ſlay the Dragon; for to the juſt, Heaven will give ſtrength and victory!"

" As thou art a bold hero," ſaid the Giant, who had hitherto kept ſilence, " and thy magnanimity has granted me my life, thou ſhalt now reap the fruit of my ſervices in return. I once ſlept near the Dragon, he had juſt had a hard battle, and threw himſelf down to ſleep, when, in a dream, he exclaimed, ' Ho, ho! they cannot kill me yet,—for they know not that the ſword lies hid in yon corner?' I ſought for the ſword in that corner,

and found it; only lift yon ſtone and you will ſee a ring, beneath which it lies."

Siegfried, overjoyed, haſtened to the ſpot, removed the ſtone, raiſed the ring with both his hands, and beneath it, like a bright flame, lay the glittering Dragon's ſword. He ſtooped to lift it up, but the faithleſs Giant took his dagger and aimed a blow at Siegfried's neck, at the ſpot where the linden-leaf had fallen. But juſt as he was ſucceeding in inflicting the wound, Euglein ſtruck the Giant with his ring ſo violently on the knee, that he ſtaggered, and the edge of the dagger glided off. But the Giant now ſeized the hero, and claſping him with both arms from behind, dragged him to the abyſs, in ſpite of the furious attacks of the dogs.

The King's daughter fell weeping on her knees, wrung her hands, and prayed to Heaven, while the Giant laughed aloud, as if certain of victory. Siegfried however twined his arms around the body of the falſe monſter, and preſſed ſo ſtrongly into his wounds, that all his ſtrength paſſed away, and the Giant loſt both ſight and hearing. His black blood flowed in broad ſtreams; he roared and curſed himſelf and the hero, on whom he ſtill kept a firm hold with his laſt ſtrength to pull him into the abyſs with himſelf. But it was all in vain: Siegfried looſened himſelf from his graſp, and at length puſhed him into the chaſm. With a hollow ſound he fell into the mighty depth below, and as he fell he broke aſunder an enormous oak, which covered his corpſe.

LAST ADVENTURE.

Siegfried's Fight with the Dragon.

SIEGFRIED was now deſirous to try the ſharpneſs of his ſword, and it glided through the Dragon's ſhield like water and went deep into the rock. All were full of joy when they ſaw this; but the wiſe Dwarf alone looked grave and ſaid, "Thou haſt a harder battle ſtill to fight, and thou requireſt meat and drink to refreſh thee for it." Then he blew his little ſilver horn, and at its ſhrill ſound there came forth from the crevices of the rocks Dwarfs, white and grey. Then they ſpread a carpet and brought meat and drink of all kinds, and Siegfried ſat down and ate, and the maiden offered him a golden drinking-horn, ſaying, "Hail to the hero of the Netherlands! hail to the bold ſon of Siegmund! hail to the fighter with the Dragon, Siegfried!" The hero drained the cup and ſaid, "Truly never did I feel ſo inſpired with courage, and never longed for the chaſe of the boar in my father's foreſts as I now do for the conteſt with this hideous Dragon, the keeper of the treaſure of the Nibelungen. If my forefathers ſtood here in a circle, as they ſtand around the walls of our halls at home, they would indeed rejoice in the conteſt, for the ſound of my ſword ſhall re-echo far around, and

gladden the heart of many a hero. Come what may, I dread none on earth, and I ſtand here on this ſtone, armed and prepared with this uplifted ſword to meet the fight."

As he ſpoke thus a roaring ſound was heard, which vibrated nearer and nearer, as if the mountain were ſhaken and falling into ruins. Thereupon the maiden was ſtruck with great terror; but the eyes of Siegfried glanced like two flaming ſwords, and he bade her be of good cheer, ſaying, "The Author of Light gave us life, and how ſhall the Dragon of darkneſs take it away? my ſharp and gleaming ſword ſhall dazzle him ſo that he ſhall not be able to diſtinguiſh the day from the night."

As the evening twilight aroſe, the Dragon came ſlowly onwards, hovering like a dark ſtorm-cloud. Siegfried advanced and met him on the edge of the rock. Near him ſtood his two faithful dogs. The maiden drew back, and the Dwarf put on his cap of miſt and crept into a crevice of the rock. Three times did the Dragon fly ſearching around the ſtone, for as yet he had not ſeen the hero. But juſt as he was about to lie down he perceived Siegfried, and ſending forth furiouſly blue flames, he laſhed the earth with his tail. In a moment the hero's ſhield was covered with blue flame, and became glowing hot; his dogs were about to fly at the monſter, but they fell dead to the earth at his firſt breath. The poiſonous flames darted more and more fearfully on Siegfried; and to cool himſelf he was forced to withdraw into the vaulted gallery of

the mountain. Thither the Dragon could not follow him, for the paſſage was too narrow; ſo he remained ſpouting forth fire at the entrance, and knew not how to get in; nor did Siegfried know how he ſhould reach the Dragon with his good ſword. In this difficulty he looked around and ſaw lying near him a huge ſtone, which ten men could not have lifted. Remembering his great anceſtors, he ſeized it, and threw it in the gaping throat of the peſtiferous monſter; and now the flames being quenched, he darted with ſword and ſhield upon the Dragon, and dealt him blow after blow upon the head.

But the blows of Siegfried's ſword at firſt produced no effect, the ſcales were hard as diamonds, and the ſword flew back. On a ſudden, as he was ſtriking with all his might, he heard a plaintive tone, which ſeemed like the voice of the Dwarf, as if calling for help from the Dragon's jaws. And ſo it was; for the Dwarf had ſeated himſelf, under his inviſible cap of miſt, upon the ſtone which Siegfried had thrown into the Dragon's mouth, and he now called out in terror leſt Siegfried ſhould kill him.

When the Dragon heard the cry of the inviſible Dwarf he turned round; but at that moment Siegfried dealt him a heavy blow on his neck, at the point where the ſcales were a little parted. The ſword ſtruck into the neck, and the pent-up flames burſt through the wound at the ſide, ſo that Siegfried was now ſafe from them. The little Dwarf crept quickly out of the wound. The Dragon raved ſtill more with the

pain; he fell on Siegfried, ſnatched his ſhield, and ſnapping it like a lath he flew at the hero's head. But Siegfried too was now fired with rage, and graſping his ſword firmly ſtruck off the monſter's right claw. Thereupon the Dragon roared with fury, ſwung his tail around, and ſtrove to entwine the hero in its folds. But Siegfried at a bound leaped high above the tail, and now ran with ſuch force againſt the monſter that he threw him backward on the ground; then ſeizing his ſword with both hands, with the firſt blow he drove it two ſpans deep into his breaſt, at the ſecond he cut his heart through and through, ſo that the ſword ſank deep into the ſtone; and as he was about to give a third blow, he himſelf fell ſenſeleſs beſide the monſter, which in the death-ſtruggle was conſumed in its own fire.

Such was the great fight with the black, poiſonous Dragon, who guarded the treaſure of the ancient curſe, by which the hero of the Low Countries acquired fame and glory above that of all his fathers. The deeds he wrought with his ſharp ſword at the Drachenſtein have reſounded for centuries from north to ſouth in many an heroic lay by the ancient minſtrels; nor can the name of Siegfried the Dragon-ſlayer ever paſs away as long as German ſong is ſung.

Pale as death lay the exhauſted hero for a long time; then he fetched a deep breath, and ſlowly opened his eyes. But how great was his ſorrow when he ſaw lying near him the King's daughter, pale and motionleſs as a corpſe. He ſprang

up, took her in his arms, called on her by name; but ſhe awoke not, nor gave any ſigns of life. The hero began to lament aloud his misfortune, when at length Euglein the Dwarf came ſtealing by. He looked about on all ſides, and was overjoyed when he ſaw that Siegfried had ſlain the Dragon. He immediately went to the virgin, took a root from his girdle, and with its ſcent awoke her to new life. The joy of Siegfried was only equalled by that of the beautiful daughter of the Rhine King; and Euglein too was ſo delighted at their deliverance from the Dragon, that he begged the hero to claim from him whatever he liked, gold or diamonds, coſtly ornaments or weapons, for all were at his command. Siegfried thanked him for his offer, but ſaid that his deliverance of the maiden was reward enough for him; if however he deſired to do him a favour, he would aſk him, who was ſo well informed of the future, to tell him his deſtiny. The Dwarf immediately placed his bright gleaming ſhield on a table of ſtone, and held a handful of dry graſs to the ſun, which forthwith burſt into a flame: then he ſtrewed a precious perfume over the ſhield. A ſingular odour diffuſed itſelf around, but the Dwarf inhaled the vapour, his eyes cloſed, and turning a coſtly ring on his finger, began, as if in a deep ſlumber, to pronounce the following invocation:—

"As the falcon in its motion
Flies in circles round and round,

Seeking both o'er land and ocean
Where its prey may beſt be found;

" So the venerable ſage,
Turning ſtill his magic ring,
Sees through many a coming age
Many a dim and diſtant thing."

On this he ceaſed awhile, then pointed with his finger to the ſouth, then to the right and left, as if forms ſurrounded him on every ſide, and then announced the marriage of Siegfried with Kriemhilda thus:

" Roſy gardens on the Rhine,
Meadows full of bright ſunſhine,
Through which wander ſtreamlets fair,
Stags and roebucks pair and pair,
Foliage, with the feather'd throng
Warbling wild the woods among;
While a ſilken thread incloſes
All this fairy bow'r of roſes.
Many a knight, with martial tramp,
Watches round that foreſt camp;
From the branches, from the trees
Pennons wanton in the breeze.
Round the throne ſo fair to ſee,
All of gold and ivory.

" Ladies look on ſcenes ſo fair,
Brave knights look on ladies there;
One his proud compeers outvies,
Like the ſun in yonder ſkies;
Like the moon in modeſt pride,
One ſweet maiden is his bride;
For to her that hero-youth
Gives a ring in pledge of truth.
All the maidens ſoftly ſigh,
All the youthful heroes cry,
Hail to Siegfried and his prize,
This, O this, is Paradiſe!

" But an evil dame is nigh,
Malice in her heart and eye,
And ſhe brings that bride ſo fair
Three young roſebuds ſweet and rare,
Take the pureſt of the three,
Take, ſhe cries, 'tis meant for thee!
But beware, ſweet bride, beware,
For a thorn is lurking there;
See, it wounds thy finger fair.
Bride, why ſtops thy ſobbing breath?
Bride, why art thou pale as death?"

The Dwarf was ſilent for awhile, and then turning towards the weſt began to ſing thus of Siegfried's death:

" Hunter's horn and hunter's ſong,
Wolves and bears together throng,
Through the wild wood runs the boar,
Hounds that follow bark and roar.

" Foxes creep in corners ſly,
Birds are twitt'ring in the ſky,
Two white does in flight are ſeen,
And a ſtag in clover green.

" Hark! a ſound of hunter's horn,
By the breezes hither borne,
Through the deep wood's dark defiles,
Where the ſunbeam never ſmiles.

" Hark! three diſmal ravens croak
On a dry and wither'd oak,
And their dark foreboding ſong
Tells a tale of death and wrong.

" And the ſtreamlet's gentle flood
Flows with warm and vital blood:
Stretch'd upon the flowery heath,
See, a hero ſleeps in death!

" Howling wild his faithful hound
Licks in vain his deadly wound;
While his falcon from his breaſt
Drives the ravens to their neſt.

" See, his ſtainleſs ſword and ſhield
Lie unuſed upon the field;
He hath never ſeen his foe,
Treach'ry laid the hero low.

" In his halls two women fair
Sit in fierce defiance there,
Frowning darkly each at each,
Deigning not a word of ſpeech.

" Haſting from the neighb'ring wood
Come two knights, all ſtain'd with blood:
Of the women, one is glad,
But the other pale and ſad.

" One has drain'd a cup of gold,
Sinks the other pale and cold:
One the thought of rage inſpires,
But revenge the other fires!"

Finally the Dwarf turned towards the north and ſang with a hollow voice the revenge of Chriemhilda:

" Heroes feaſt within a palace,
Gueſts all wear the feſtive wreath;
But their mirth is changed to malice,
And their dance to a dance of death.

" Shrieks of horror, ſhrieks of anger,
Tell the fury of their ſtrife;
Anſwering fierce the trumpet's clangour,
Stern demanding life for life.

" Sword and ſhield in ſtrife are meeting,
Steel and iron ſternly ſtrive,
And of gueſts that late were greeting,
Few ſhall quit the ſpot alive.

" In that hall of ſtrife and treaſon
Many a braveſt knight muſt yield;
Like the ſheaves in harveſt ſeaſon
Corſes ſtrew that fatal field.

" But in death their hate is baniſh'd,
Foemen fall beſide their foe,
And their hatred hath but vaniſh'd
Now that death hath laid them low.

" Wand'ring where the dead are lying,
Say, what myſtic form appears
Mid the wounded and the dying,—
'Tis a woman bathed in tears.

" Fire has ſeized the hall around her,
While its vapours choke her breath,
She exclaims, while flames ſurround her,
We have died for Siegfried's death!"

Thus ſang the Dwarf of the fate of future days. Siegfried and the maiden were deeply affected by the ſerious tone of his ſong. Although they had not underſtood all that he ſaid, yet they perceived that bleeding forms looked through the miſt that ſurrounded the whole, and that theſe were lighted rather by fierce and fatal lightning than by the gentle rays of ſunſhine and peace. When the Dwarf had ended, he took his leave, ſaying that he muſt deſcend deep into the mountain, whither his Dwarfs had fled, anxious for the reſult of the conteſt: for he would bring them the glad intelligence of victory. Then he bade the hero farewell, and promiſed, if he ſhould require his aid, to aſſiſt him with all his power and all his wealth; adding, that he would find two horſes ready for mounting at the mouth of the cave. Siegfried thanked him, and the Dwarf diſappeared in a crevice of the rock.

The hero and the King's daughter reſted for awhile on the ſummit of the Drachenſtein, and looked at the far diſtance, over the lofty wooded tops of the mountains, over the green plains and vales, the barren heaths and ſilver ſtreams. Then they examined everything in the cave, and came to the Dragon's couch, which he had made of the ſkins of lions. Siegfried lifted up the ſkins, and a dazzling light burſt upon his ſight, and the treaſure and the ring lay before him. But he forgot the warning voice of the Dwarf, concerning the ancient curſe which lay on the gold of the Nibelungen: he took the treaſure of diſcord and envy, and hence at a later period the words of

Euglein came to be fulfilled, and he and his whole race were annihilated by fire and ſword, like thoſe who had poſſeſſed it before. The treaſure however was caſt into the Rhine, where it may reſt until a holy hand ſhall find it, over which the curſe has no power.

Here, however, ends this tradition: and its ſequel has been ſaid and ſung in other ſongs and legends, in which, reader, thou mayeſt hear how Siegfried celebrated in the Roſe-garden of Worms his marriage with Chriemhilda, how he glorioufly contended in ſeven conflicts, winning heroic fame, and how he was ſlain in the foreſt by the cruel Hagen at the inſtigation of Brunhilda, but was fatally avenged by Chriemhilda on the Giants, their brothers and relations.

But the good town of Worms, where Siegfried celebrated his marriage and where he was treacherouſly ſlain, honoured his memory by a praiſeworthy cuſtom for centuries after, out of gratitude for its deliverance from the cruel Dragon. When a minſtrel ſang his deeds publicly before all the people in ſuch a manner that the judges appointed could find no fault, a piece of gold was awarded him by the council of the city. In our poor times this ancient cuſtom no longer exiſts; but in former days, the city cauſed the figures of Siegfried and the ancient race of kings to be painted in different places, at the council-houſe, at the Mainz-gate, at the new tower, and at the mint, where the bones of the Dragon hung in chains of iron. Siegfried's ſpear was preſerved, and the Roſe-garden is ſtill ſhown;

and when, in 1488, the Emperor Frederick the Third was at Worms, he ordered the bones of the hero to be ſought for in the churchyard, but nothing was diſcovered. Certain it is however, that up to the preſent day the armorial bearing of Worms is the Giant's key which locked up the ſtone, and the ſupporter the fiery Dragon whom Siegfried ſlew, and that his memory lives in the ſongs of many a minſtrel and in the hearts of the people.

Charles Whittingham, Chiswick.

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